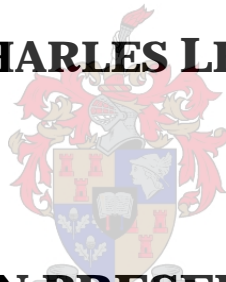


**THE PAPACY AS
ECUMENICAL CHALLENGE:
CONTEMPORARY ANGLICAN AND
PROTESTANT PERSPECTIVES ON
THE PETRINE MINISTRY**

by

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PROMOTOR: PROF. D.J. SMIT

DECEMBER 2004

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any University for a degree.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

**“The Papacy as Ecumenical Challenge:
Contemporary Anglican and Protestant Perspectives
on the Petrine Ministry”**

Clint Le Bruyns (D.Th. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY)

Promotor: Prof DJ Smit

ABSTRACT:

This dissertation addresses the changing Anglican and Protestant perspectives on the subject of the papacy, their greatest ecumenical ‘thorn in the flesh’. Studying their important ecumenical materials, it observes how the papacy is being understood anew as a potentially positive ministry structure. It finds that these churches, in varying degrees, identify the need for and value of a universal ministry of unity in the church, and that the Petrine office may potentially be recognised in the future by these churches as a legitimate and propitious structure of Christian ministry, though not in its present form and manner of exercise.

[99 words]

ABSTRACT:

This dissertation explores how Anglican and Protestant church perspectives on the papacy are increasingly changing, as they identify the need for and value of a universal ministry of unity that may potentially be recognised in the future as a legitimate and propitious structure of ministry, though not without modification.

[49 words]

KEY WORDS:

Papacy, Petrine ministry, papal office, ecumenism, Anglican-Roman Catholic, Protestant-Roman Catholic, ecclesiology

ABSTRACT

There is currently a renewed ecumenical interest in the nature and function of the Petrine office for the broader community of churches. This dissertation addresses how Anglican and Protestant churches are treating the subject of the papacy, their greatest ecumenical 'thorn in the flesh', in the light of various contextual, theological, and methodological shifts in contemporary ecumenical life and thought.

A significant turning point in the relations of Anglican and Protestant churches with the Roman Catholic Church has been the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which profoundly influenced their relationships by bringing Roman Catholicism into the modern ecumenical movement and, *ipso facto*, facilitating a new and constructive ecumenical discourse, as these churches committed themselves to overcoming old obstacles in new and creative ways. In this way, the longstanding stumbling block of the papacy was placed on the ecumenical agenda in their respective formal bilateral dialogues at the local, national, and international levels.

Another turning point in their relations was the release of the Lima document of 1982, which dealt with ministry as one of the three most church-dividing issues among Christians. In this way, it provided a theological entry point for exploring together the problem of the Petrine ministry. One of the most crucial turning points, however, was the papal encyclical of 1995, *Ut Unum Sint*, in which Pope John Paul II considered the subject of the papal office as an historical source of ecumenical division for Roman Catholics with other churches. The pope, however, proceeded not only to describe the ideal nature and value of this office, but apologised for the damage it had caused experientially among the churches, and then invited all churches with their leaders and theologians to engage with him in a new dialogue on the Petrine office and its ministry for the churches at large.

This study responds to each of these factors by analysing the ecumenical dialogue materials of these churches to gain an overview and insight vis-à-vis how these churches are talking about the papacy in recent decades. It learns, *inter alia*, that the churches in varying degrees are increasingly recognising the need for and value of a

ministry of unity for the church universal, and in this regard are undergoing some changes in their perspectives on the papal office. The evidence points to the fact that the Petrine office may possibly be recognised in the future by these churches as a legitimate and propitious structure of Christian ministry, though not in its present form and manner of exercise.

OPSOMMING

Daar is huidiglik 'n hernude ekumeniese belangstelling in die aard en funksie van die Amp van Petrus vir die breër gemeenskap van kerke. Hierdie proefskrif spreek die Anglikaanse- en Protestantse kerke se siening aangaande die pouslike amp, hulle grootste ekumeniese “doring in die vlees,” aan in terme van verskillende kontekstuele, teologiese en metodologiese verskuiwings in die kontemporêre ekumeniese lewe en nadenke.

'n Belangrike draaipunt in die verhoudinge tussen die Anglikaanse- en Protestantse kerke met die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk was die Tweede Vatikaanse Konsilie (1962-1965). Hierdie konsilie het die verhoudinge grondig beïnvloed deurdat Rooms-Katolisisme ingebring is in die moderne ekumeniese beweging, en *ipso facto* 'n nuwe en konstruktiewe ekumeniese diskoers moontlik gemaak het soos hierdie kerke hulle verbind het tot die oorbrugging van ou struikelblokke op nuwe en kreatiewe wyses. Hierdeur is die ou struikelblok van die pousdom op die ekumeniese agenda geplaas in die vorm van bilaterale dialoë op plaaslike-, nasionale- en internasionale vlak.

Nog 'n draaipunt in die verhoudinge was die beskikbaarstelling van die 1982 Lima dokument wat die amp as een van die drie sake wat die Christelike kerk die meeste verdeel ondersoek het. Hierdeur het 'n teologiese toegangspunt ontstaan vir 'n gesamentlike ondersoek na die probleem van die Amp van Petrus. Een van die belangrikste draaipunte was egter die pouslike ensikliek van 1995, *Ut Unum Sint*, waarin Pous Johannes Paulus II die saak van die Pouslike Amp as 'n historiese bron van verdeling tussen die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk en ander kerke beskryf het. Die Pous het egter nie net bloot voortgegaan om die ideale aard en waarde van hierdie amp te beskryf nie, maar het ook apologie aangeteken vir die skade wat dit onder die kerke veroorsaak het. Hy het verder alle kerke met hulle leiers en teoloë uitgenooi om met hom in gesprek te tree aangaande die Amp en bediening van Petrus vir kerke in die breë.

Dié studie ondersoek elk van die faktore deur die ekumenies-dialogiese materiaal van bogenoemde kerke te analiseer om sodoende 'n oorsig te gee van en insig te verkry in

die manier waarop dié kerke die afgelope paar dekades oor die Pousdom gepraat het. Die konklusie is, *inter alia*, dat die kerke in wisselende graad die behoefte aan en waarde van 'n bediening van eenheid vir die universele kerk besef en in dié verband besig is om veranderinge te ondergaan in hulle perspektiewe op die Amp van die Pous. Die navorsing toon dat die Amp van Petrus moontlik in die toekoms deur hierdie kerke erken sal word as 'n legitieme en waardevolle struktuur vir Christelike bediening, alhoewel nie in sy huidige vorm en wyse van beoefening nie.

FOR MANDY AND AMY

I was once invited to the home of some acquaintances for dinner. When all the guests had arrived, the hostess invited us into the dining room. As I entered the room, I noticed with astonishment that there was a horse on the table. I caught my breath but didn't say a word.

I was the first to enter the room, so I was able to observe the other guests. They responded much as I had – they entered, saw the horse, gasped and stared, but said nothing.

It was cramped sitting at the table and trying to avoid the horse. Everyone was obviously ill at ease. We were all trying not to look at the horse, yet unable to keep our eyes off it.

I thought several times of saying, "Look, there's a horse on the table." But I didn't know the host and hostess well, and I didn't want to mention something that might embarrass them. After all, it was their house. Who was I to say they couldn't have a horse on the table?

I could have said that I didn't mind, but that would have been untrue – its presence upset me so much that I enjoyed neither the dinner nor the company. I excused myself early and went home.

I later learned that the host and hostess were hoping the dinner would be a success despite the horse. But both they and the other guests had thought about little else than the horse and how to avoid mentioning it.

An ancient Sufi parable

Le Pape, Nous le savons bien, est sans doute l'obstacle le plus grave sur la route de l'œcuménisme. [The Pope, as we know well, is undoubtedly the gravest obstacle in the path of ecumenism.]

Pope Paul VI, Address to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, 1967

This is an immense task, which we cannot refuse and which I cannot carry out by myself. Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea "that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn. 17:21)?

Pope John Paul II, Ut Unum Sint, 1995

The papal authority, no less than any other within the Church, is a manifestation of the continuing presence of the Spirit of Love in the Church or it is nothing.

Honolulu Report, 1981

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
ARCIC	Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission
BEM	Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (Lima Document)
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
ECT	Evangelicals and Catholics Together
ERCDOM	Evangelical – Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
PCPCU	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
SPCU	Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i>
UUS	<i>Ut Unum Sint</i>
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WMC	World Methodist Council

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND PROMISE OF THE PETRINE MINISTRY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The topic for consideration is as follows: **The papacy as ecumenical challenge: Contemporary Anglican and Protestant perspectives on the Petrine ministry.** The renewed interest in the Petrine office by post-Reformation churches¹ attests not only to its significant historical and theological role in the past, but especially to its ongoing importance and controversy for contemporary church and society. On the one side, the papal office prevails as the enduring ecumenical enigma for these churches by virtue of its theological claims and manner of exercise.² On the other side, the papal office is being freshly examined by these churches for its potential import as a legitimate and propitious ministry.³

¹ Notwithstanding the importance and resourcefulness of the Churches of the East apropos their participation in the Petrine discourse, this research project does not include any distinctive focus on these churches for the sake of limiting the scope of the study to the Anglican and Protestant churches.

² Its problematic dynamics range from its profession of divine institution, special jurisdiction, primatial authority and infallibility, to its position on women's ordination, sexual ethics, dissent, and so on. Of particular concern to many churches is the way the papal office functions in practice, such as the way it deals with dissenting views on certain issues by its fellow bishops and priests. For example, many churches looking in at Rome lament the way the papacy bans discussion within the church on women's ordination to the ministerial priesthood and removes theologians from teaching positions as punishment for adopting a different view on the matter.

³ This reassessment of the papacy is discernible within contemporary literature on the Petrine ministry by Roman Catholic and, more significantly for this study, by other church representatives, as well as featuring within various ecumenical dialogues and statements. Evidence of such literature and dialogues will surface progressively in the course of this study. For a resourceful list of recent literature on the papacy, see Avery Dulles and Peter Granfield, *The Theology of the Church: A Bibliography* (New York: Paulist, 1999), 107-112, but also 38-40, 113-117, 118-122, 123-125. Those books not listed by Dulles and Granfield but which are extremely important for the topic, include the following (in chronological order): Robert McGlory, *Power and the Papacy: The People and Politics Behind the Doctrine of Infallibility* (Liguori: Triumph, 1997), 232pp; Alphonsus Ndonwanne Okonkwo, *The Question of the Relation of the Episcopal Ministry with the Papal Primacy since the Second Vatican Council: A Systematic, Sacramental-Theological Inquiry* (Roma, 1997), 164pp; Margaret O'Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), 180pp; John R. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 189pp; James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: "Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue"* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 211pp; Paul Collins, *Upon this Rock: The Popes and their Changing Role* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 404pp; Russell Shaw, *Papal Primacy in the Third Millennium* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000), 186pp; Garry Wills, *Papal Sin:*

This chapter introduces this double-edged sword of the papal office against the backdrop of recent contextual, theological, and methodological turning points in the contemporary church. These foundational factors set the scene for understanding and interpreting current Anglican and Protestant perspectives on the Petrine ministry.

1.2. NEW DIRECTIONS: THE OPENING OF A CLOSED ISSUE

1.2.1. A New Context: From Vatican I to Vatican II

The context of the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) is of utmost importance for reviewing past and present perspectives on the Petrine office. When Pope Pius IX announced his intention in 1864 to convoke this Council, he exhibited a high degree of resentment and antagonism towards modern society by virtue of the church's struggle against modernity.⁴ As Hermann Pottmeyer points out, the church and its papacy were harassed in their confrontation with the three traumas of conciliarism and Gallicanism, the system of a state-controlled church, and rationalism and liberalism, which flowed out of the various developments that set in after the French Revolution.⁵ The papacy, treating these as serious threats, adopted a defensive stance towards modern society and any others who did not share its way of thinking.

Given the besieged setting of the nineteenth-century Roman church in which the papacy was weakening, the principle of authority became "the church's most

Structures of Deceit (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 326pp; Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 166pp.

⁴ Pope Pius IX's speech read: "For violent enemies of God and men have assaulted and trampled upon the Catholic Church, its salutary doctrine, its venerable power, and the supreme authority of this Apostolic See. They have treated with contempt all sacred things; plundered ecclesiastical goods; harassed in all manner of ways bishops, highly esteemed men dedicated to the sacred ministry, and laymen distinguished for their Catholic dispositions; suppressed religious orders and congregations; widely circulated infamous books of all kinds, harmful periodicals, and pernicious sects of various types; taken from the hands of the clergy almost everywhere the education of unfortunate young folk; and what is still worse, entrusted this education in not a few places to teachers of harmful error." See John F. Broderick, trans. *Documents of Vatican I, 1869-1870* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1971), 13-14.

⁵ For an insightful description, see Hermann J. Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & II* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 36-47. Another resourceful overview is by Shaw, *Papal Primacy*, 35-78.

important bastion against the modern world”⁶ with the logical conclusion: “The authority of the pope had to be strengthened in order to restore it. ... rescue could only come from the pope and a centralised exercise of his primacy.”⁷ It was inevitable, therefore, that Vatican I’s *Pastor Aeternus* would facilitate this centralisation process.⁸ It grounded the doctrine of the papacy in a pyramidal ecclesiological framework in which the dogmas of infallibility and primacy of jurisdiction were defined.⁹ The Petrine office no doubt became progressively authoritarian in nature, reactionary towards society, disparaging towards other churches, and overly institutional in approach.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) provided a favourable climate and milieu for forging a new understanding and experience of the Petrine office. It is widely hailed as a revolutionary turning point for modern Roman Catholicism.¹⁰ If Pope Pius IX shut the windows of the church to the world and other churches, Pope John XXIII’s programme of *aggiornamento* opened these up again to let the stale air out

⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁷ Ibid. For example, the ecumenically notorious matter of papal infallibility was defined at this time. Robert McGlory provides an indepth treatment of the people and politics at play around Vatican I, especially as it relates to the development of the Roman Catholic dogma of papal infallibility. His analysis exposes the real threats confronting the papacy at that time, which places in proper perspective why it exercised its function in the way that it did. See McGlory, *Power and the Papacy*, passim. An earlier treatment on infallibility by Margaret O’Gara is particularly resourceful, where she discusses the specific drama involving the French minority bishops at Vatican I who opposed the definition of papal infallibility. See Margaret O’Gara, *Triumph in Defeat: Infallibility, Vatican I, and the French Minority Bishops* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1988), 296pp. For her discussion in article form, see O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*, 45-62.

⁸ An excerpt from *Pastor Aeternus* exemplifies this mindset: “It is towards the Roman church, on account of its superior origin, that it has always been necessary for every Church, that is, for the faithful from everywhere, to turn in order that they should be made one body only in that holy see from which flow all the rights of the venerable communion.” *Dogmatic Constitution I on the Church of Christ*, “Pastor Aeternus”, Session IV (July 18, 1870), Coll.Lac. (CL) 7, 482-487. PIO IX, Acta, 1/V, 207-218; AAS 6 (1870), 40-47; DS 1821-1840 (DH 3050-3075), §3057.

⁹ Patrick Granfield not only offers a brief albeit insightful overview of the Vatican I drama, but also makes a few remarks about the ecumenical impact of the papal definition. Furthermore, he offers some helpful explanatory comments on *Pastor Aeternus*’ primacy of jurisdiction of the pope as ‘supreme and full, universal, ordinary, immediate, and truly episcopal.’ See Patrick Granfield, *The Limits of the Papacy* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 37ff.

¹⁰ Tom Stransky rightly contends: “Without taking account of the debates and resolutions of Vatican II, it is impossible to understand the modern RCC. The church’s current consensus and its dissents – its confidence and its hesitations in theology, pastoral and missionary activities, social and political involvements, ecumenical and interreligious concerns, and understanding of its own structures – are a result of the Vatican II deliberations and of the subsequent debates about what they meant and intended.” See Tom F. Stransky, “Vatican II (1962-65)” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002), 1188-1189. Moreover, based on personal experience in theological interaction with Roman Catholic theologians and ecumenists at various theological conferences and within various professional societies, the references to Vatican II in these meetings are nothing short of ubiquitous! For an important work on Vatican II, see Xavier Rynne, *Vatican Council II* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), 594pp.

and the fresh air in.¹¹ Through the Council, according to Thomas Rausch, the church “experienced sweeping changes in its liturgy and worship, its theology, its understanding of authority and ministry, its religious communities, its parish life, even its popular culture.”¹² It instilled within the church “a new vitality, and by calling the Church to the renewal of its structures, theology, and life, has enabled it to play a conscious role in its own change and transformation.”¹³

For this reason Philippe Levillain contends that the Council “constituted an ecclesiological reference point in the history of Christianity.”¹⁴ While Vatican II reaffirmed the doctrine of the papacy as taught at Vatican I,¹⁵ its new setting of *aggiornamento* repositioned the Petrine office in a way that became possible for a new appreciation and recognition by Roman Catholics and other Christians. These shifts concern *inter alia* the Petrine office being grounded in an ecclesiology of communion, becoming more ecumenical in scope and influence, becoming more public in orientation, and reflecting a more personal human face in its activities.

1.2.1.1. A communion ecclesiology

At Vatican II the Petrine office shifted from being grounded in a pyramidal ecclesiological framework to embrace an ecclesiology of communion. As Margaret O’Gara bemoans, this earlier base was problematic as a top-down configuration that confused unity with uniformity and paved the way for an over-emphasis on the universal Church at the expense of the local church, on papal centralisation, and on

¹¹ The meaning of the Italian term is not precise, but was generally understood to refer to the renewal, updating, and modernisation of the Roman Catholic Church at Vatican II. There is the well-known story of how John XXIII described the goal of this Council by going to the nearest window and opening it to allow in some fresh air, which alluded to the spiritual renewal and openness to the world that the Roman Catholic Church was preparing itself for at this time.

¹² Thomas P. Rausch, *Catholicism at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996), 17.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See Philippe Levillain, “Vatican II (Ecumenical Council of)” in Philippe Levillain (Ed.), *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (Independence: Routledge, 2001), 1569, also 1569-1586.

¹⁵ Cf. Vatican II’s document on the Church *Lumen Gentium* in which the institution, perpetuity, and nature of papal primacy with its infallible teaching authority is affirmed: “This teaching concerning the institution, the permanence, the nature and import of the sacred primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching office, the sacred synod proposes anew to be firmly believed by all the faithful...” See *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (21 November 1964) in Austin Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II*, Vol. 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Northport: Costello, 1996), (full text 350-426), §18. Hereafter referred to as *LG*.

personal devotion to the pope.¹⁶ Jean-Marie Tillard takes issue with how this concept presented the pope as being more than a pope, which ultimately moulded a problematic papacy for the episcopate, laity, and other churches. He laments: “From that time on, any teaching which did not honour the supreme power of ‘the head of the Church’ in absolute terms would carry the stigma of error; in the eyes of the average Catholic, it would be a distortion of the Council’s meaning.”¹⁷

Vatican II’s communion ecclesiology corrects these imbalances. In the Council’s premier Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, the significance of the local church, the collegiality of bishops,¹⁸ and the role of the episcopate in ecclesial governance,¹⁹ are affirmed and underlined. For example,²⁰ as Patrick Granfield notes, the style and substance changed in the way the hierarchical structure of the church was treated, “not as dominion but as service.”²¹ Moreover, its starting point in this treatment began “not with the Pope but with the College of Bishops as successor of the college of the Apostles under the leadership of the Pope, the successor of Peter.”²² In this way it pointed to the notion of ecclesial authority and collegiality, which was good news, given Tillard’s disappointment with Vatican I’s overwhelming emphasis on Roman primacy with no regard whatsoever to the episcopate.²³

By shifting the papacy ecclesologically from a defensive, pyramidal office to one serving in love and collaboration, this communion ecclesiology of Vatican II provides an important avenue through which Anglicans and Protestants could potentially find greater recognition of the Petrine service and deeper communion

¹⁶ O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*, 122ff.

¹⁷ J.M.R. Tillard, *The Bishop of Rome* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier Inc., 1983 ET), 28-29.

¹⁸ For example, *LG* §§22-23.

¹⁹ For example, *LG* §§24-29. While Vatican I viewed the church from a top-down approach, i.e. starting with the bishop of Rome as its head, Vatican II’s point of departure placed the bishops as “successors of the apostles” on level ground with the pope vis-à-vis the affairs of the church. The Petrine office formed part and parcel of the communion, which included clergy, laity and religious, and thus behoved the pope to work in collaboration with and in service to these members of the one communion.

²⁰ Since only a few examples are highlighted, for more detailed analyses and observations see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 28-29; O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*, 122-132; Granfield, *The Limits of the Papacy*, 43-44.

²¹ Granfield, *The Limits of the Papacy*, 43.

²² Ibid.

²³ To follow his discussion, see Tillard, *The Bishop of Rome*, 34-50 passim.

with Rome.²⁴ For as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen rightly points out: “the leading theme in the ecclesiologies of the ecumenical movement has been *koinonia*-ecclesiology”,²⁵ which exists as “one of the few orientations most Christian churches have gladly embraced in recent years.”²⁶

1.2.1.2. An ecumenical scope

At Vatican II the Petrine office shifted from being a service of the Roman Catholic Church only and became more ecumenically conscious and committed.²⁷ Prior to the Council, other churches were viewed with contempt as heretics and schismatics who could not have any cooperative relationship with Roman Catholics as equals. The papacy resisted any attempts aimed at involving Roman Catholics in ecumenical gatherings, with its clearest signal promulgated by Pope Pius XI in the form of his 1928 encyclical *Mortalium Animos* in which the pope concluded that Christian unity was only possible if those who previously rejected Roman Catholicism returned to it.²⁸

Vatican II's ecumenical commitment modified these earlier positions and sentiments about other churches. The fact that a pope himself convoked this Council, coupled with ecumenical representation,²⁹ was itself a significant step in the right direction. Then, *Lumen Gentium* along with the premier Decree on

²⁴ Dennis Doyle's critical examination of communion ecclesiology in contemporary Roman Catholicism is extremely resourceful. See Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000), 195pp.

²⁵ Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 86.

²⁶ Ibid. Important publications on communion ecclesiology are listed in Dulles and Granfield, *The Theology of the Church*, 91-93. See also Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *The Catholicity of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 1-12; William G. Rusch, “The Study of Ecclesiology by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 27, No. 10 (November 1998), 1-2; Geoffrey Wainwright, “The Nature of Communion” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 28, No. 6 (June 1999), 1-8.

²⁷ For a resourceful overview, see Tom Stransky, “Roman Catholic Church and Pre-Vatican II Ecumenism” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 996-998.

²⁸ See Pope Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* in Claudia Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939* (Wilmington: McGrath, 1981), 317.

²⁹ Thomas Rausch explains how the pope set about promoting his ecumenical intentions in both concrete and symbolic ways: “First, he asked that official observers be delegated by the Orthodox and Protestant Churches. Second, he arranged to have them seated in a place of honour in the front of the Basilica of St. Peter close to the section reserved for the cardinals. Finally, he established a new Vatican congregation, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, charged with bringing the Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement, and placed its resources at the services of the observers.” See Rausch, *Catholicism at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, 10.

Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*,³⁰ affirmed *inter alia* that other churches contained “many elements of sanctification and truth”³¹ as “separated brethren.”³² Moreover, “both sides were to blame”³³ at the time of the Reformation, which at the very least demanded that both sides work together towards unity as pilgrims on the path of Christ. In other words, the Council recognised other Christians as being in real albeit imperfect communion with Roman Catholics and who were journeying together in grace and repentance.³⁴

This ecumenical disposition of the church proved irrevocable. Following Pope John XXIII's establishment of the Secretariat (now Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU/PCPCU) in 1960, dialogues between the Vatican and other churches are commonplace as they seek deeper communion and understanding on a vast array of theological issues, including especially the ordained ministry and the Petrine office. Within the context of this new relationship with other churches, Pope Paul VI acknowledged the problematic dimensions of the papacy in his 1967 address to the SPCU: “The pope, we well know, is without doubt the most serious obstacle on the road to ecumenism.”³⁵ Pope John Paul II echoed these sentiments in his 1984 discourse at the World Council of Churches (WCC) headquarters in Geneva when he referred to the major difficulty his office poses for most other Christians.³⁶ He repeated these remarks in his 1995 papal encyclical letter on ecumenism.³⁷

Furthermore, papal teaching is increasingly being offered as a pastoral service to other churches, notwithstanding its character as an internal document of Roman

³⁰ See *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism (21 November 1964) in Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II*, (full text 452-470). Hereafter referred to as *UR*.

³¹ *LG*, §8.

³² *UR*, §3.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ For a moderate but telling selection of ecumenical literature in recent decades, see Dulles and Granfield, *The Theology of the Church*, 71-78.

³⁵ Address to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (28 April 1967), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), 497-498. He stated plainly: “What shall we say of the difficulty which arises from the function which Christ has assigned to us in the church of God and which our tradition has so authoritatively upheld. The pope, we well know, is without doubt the most serious obstacle on the road to ecumenism.” See also Paul VI, “To the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity” (April 28, 1967) in Titus Cranny (Ed.), *Pope Paul and Christian Unity* 4 (Garrison: Graymoor Unity Apostolate, 1967), 78-83.

³⁶ See John Paul II, “Ecumenism and the Role of the Bishop of Rome” in *Origins* 14 (June 28, 1984), 97-102 *passim*.

³⁷ See John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint: On Commitment to Ecumenism* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1995), §95. Hereafter referred to as *UUS*.

Catholicism. The pope has also extended his time and work to other churches by way of the many papal audiences with their leaders and representatives, who are typically treated with the same respect that they receive in their respective traditions.³⁸ These examples and more reflect how the Petrine office shifted through Vatican II to become more ecumenical in influence and scope, thus paving the way for a new appreciation and potential recognition of the pope by other churches.

1.2.1.3. A public orientation

At Vatican II the Petrine office shifted from being only ecclesiastically concerned and averse to modern society and its developments to become more oriented towards faith, life and ministry in the public arena. Its past activities were restricted to service within the church and in opposition to the world or, during its 'dark ages', to enmeshment with the world for the enrichment of the church. As a result the papacy served an intra-church role and in opposition to society, thus setting the scene for its preoccupation with matters of infallibility and other dogmatic pronouncements.

Vatican II's openness to the modern world reoriented the Petrine office to extend its focus beyond the ecclesiastical domain. In its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*,³⁹ the Council referred to Christians as those cherishing "a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history"⁴⁰ and gave attention to the plight of the poor and afflicted,⁴¹ the demands of justice and equity,⁴² as well as the subjects of marriage and family,⁴³ the development of culture,⁴⁴ socioeconomic principles,⁴⁵ the question of war and the arms race,⁴⁶ and more. The unsavoury elements in the legacy of the papacy were challenged when it declared: "The Church is not motivated by an earthly ambition but is interested in

³⁸ One case in point is found in the example of audiences with the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, who is never treated as a layperson but as a fellow bishop.

³⁹ See *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (7 December 1965) in Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II*, (full text 903-1001). Hereafter referred to as *GS*.

⁴⁰ *GS*, §1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, §§1ff.

⁴² *Ibid.*, §§23ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, §§47-52.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, §§53-62.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, §§63-72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, §§77ff.

one thing only – to carry on the work of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” in bearing witness to truth, saving rather than judging, and serving rather than being served.⁴⁷

This public orientation of the church and papacy is readily apparent in contemporary society. Its office is no longer only a point of discussion among Roman Catholics and other churches, but is presently monitored, scrutinised, critiqued, and engaged within the broader public arena of society. In this regard, respected Vatican correspondent John Allen points to the next conclave process as promising to be nothing short of a public spectacle, given the strong public orientation of the present papacy.⁴⁸ The pope is extremely newsworthy and important to the media and public at large not only as a religious leader, but also as a political player. Allen draws attention to the papacy’s public capital by suggesting that the past century “offers examples of popes who either changed the course of world history or narrowly missed the opportunity to do so by the way they chose to exercise their political clout.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., §3.

⁴⁸ He remarks that once the current pope dies, a chain of sensational events will follow: “Some six thousand journalists are expected to descend on the Eternal City to cover the death of John Paul II and the election of his successor. Roman rooftop space is being snatched up by TV networks hustling to find the just-right shot of the crowd in Saint Peter’s Square and the white smoke. CBS, for example, has paid \$180,000 for the right to use the five-thousand-square-foot terrace atop the Atlante Star Hotel, beating out CNN and a Japanese network in a fierce bidding war. The terrace offers such a spectacular view of Saint Peter’s Square that with a pair of binoculars, one can actually see inside the papal apartments. Cable television networks will be offering virtually round-the-clock coverage, parading a series of talking heads offering commentary in order to fill the long spaces between pieces of real news. ... The world’s newspapers will be filled every day with reams of reporting, analysis, and commentary, and the Internet will be abuzz with the wildest possible gossip and speculation – which will then be dutifully reported by many in the press corps. ... It is ... the greatest show on earth.” See John L. Allen, Jr., *Conclave: The Politics, Personalities, and Process of the Next Papal Election* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 4.

⁴⁹ Allen, *Conclave*, 13. He then proceeds with a case study of how recent popes participated in the public political realm and offered a resourceful contribution to the world, citing the examples of Pope John XXIII and the opening to the East, Pope Paul VI and Vietnam, and Pope John Paul II and the Beagle Islands (14-20). In summary, he asserts: “The point to be gleaned from these examples ... is that the personal background and interests of the man who becomes pope can, under the right circumstances, change history. John’s desire to be pope not just for Catholics but for all men and women led to the historic opening to the East, which helped make coexistence in the nuclear age possible. Paul VI did not succeed in ending the war in Vietnam, but he tried. Who knows how many lives were saved by the pope’s insistent pressure for peace? John Paul’s willingness to get involved wherever Catholic interests are at stake has also revitalised the political capital of the papacy” (19-20).

By facilitating the Petrine office's shift from a mere ecclesiastical office to one with greater public import,⁵⁰ Vatican II paved the way for greater appreciation and potential recognition of the pope by other churches and the public at large. The pope is no doubt a world celebrity, whom society embraces as the universal representative and spokesperson for Christianity.

1.2.1.4. A human face

At Vatican II the Petrine office shifted its image as an indifferent, juridical institution of the church to reveal a more human face of the papacy. McAfee Brown rightly employs Pope John XXIII as an apt case in point to account for a breakthrough in freeing "the ecumenical thaw after centuries of ecclesiastical cold war."⁵¹ He contends: "No doctrines were rescinded, no papal powers were foresworn, no new definitions were promulgated that set a new papal style."⁵² In fact, "what happened was simply that the office was engulfed by one who overshadowed many of the preconceptions people had always thrust upon that office."⁵³

Pope John Paul II is an exemplary pope in this regard, who has profoundly contributed to a more human papacy. As the most ecumenical pope in the history of Roman Catholicism, he travels extensively in order to make the church and papacy

⁵⁰ Robert McAfee Brown addresses this shift in his own reflection on the contextual nuances in contemporary discussions on the papacy, and contends that the papal ministry (as well as the overall ministry of the church) must find connectedness in application with the burning issues of the human family, instead of only wrestling with intra-church matters. He states: "We do not live in the 'Christendom' era any more, but in the time of the *diaspora*, the dispersion, of the church... We live in a time when the burning issues for the human family *and for the church* are going to be centred much more on questions of poverty, hunger, war and racism, than on the subtleties of 'real presence,' multiple sources of revelation, or fresh nuances on Mary's role in the economy of salvation." He continues by saying that "even in our most intricate theological exchanges about the role of the papacy, we are obligated to relate the implications of such discussions to the human realities of the great majority of the human family today ... who, if they are to be persuaded that theological refinements may contribute to the salvation of the human race, would like to see some tangible evidence of that likelihood." See Robert McAfee Brown, "Introduction" in Peter J. McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern World* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 2-3.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 3-4. For an interesting example of how Pope John XXIII's human import is embraced, even in the business world, see Bernard R. Bonnott, *Pope John XXIII: Model and Mentor for Leaders* (Staten Island: Society of St. Paul, 2003), 307pp.

more visible in the world.⁵⁴ By replacing the papacy's notorious institutional image with a more human face, a promising path has been laid for new perspectives on the Petrine office by Anglicans and Protestants. In this regard, the Petrine office has come to be appreciated as a ministry rather than a mere structure of the church.

1.2.2. A New Convergence: Theological Agreement at Lima

In January 1982 in Lima, Peru, the WCC's Faith and Order Commission released *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM), or what is often referred to as "the Lima text".⁵⁵ It was widely regarded as the most significant theological achievement of the ecumenical movement, and presently prevails as the most widely distributed, translated, and discussed ecumenical text in modern times.⁵⁶

Concerning its ecumenical import, it was noted that "many new ecumenical contacts and relationships at local and national levels" emerged from joint BEM discussions, that it was found to be "helpful in church union negotiations", that it "served as a first rallying point" in various situations, and "furthered confidence in the seriousness and opportunities of ecumenical dialogue."⁵⁷ Given the theological magnitude of BEM, it is necessary to explore how its section on "Ministry" arguably provides a pivotal theological setting for contemporary Anglican and Protestant

⁵⁴ A New York Times report in October 2002 provided the following statistical information on Pope John Paul II: The most travelled pope in history has made 240 trips in Italy and abroad since his election. He has travelled 1,237,584 kilometres, which is nearly 40 times the circumference of the Earth and more than three times the distance between the earth and moon. He has been out of Rome for about 11 percent of his pontificate. He has visited 129 countries on 98 trips abroad. See the following report "Pope is Reportedly Changing Rosary" (October 14, 2002), at www.nytimes.com/reuters/int.../international-pope.html. Accessed 21/10/2002. On being asked about the motivation for his frequent travels, his reply has often been simply: "The problem of the universal Church is to make it visible." See Gianni Giansanti, *John Paul II: Portrait of a Pontiff* (Vercelli: White Star, 2000), 91.

⁵⁵ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 33pp. Hereafter, paragraphs within the "Ministry" section are referred to by the symbol 'M'.

⁵⁶ "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: The Continuing Call to Unity". A Statement by the Faith and Order Commission Addressed to the Churches (Budapest, August 1989). Cited in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982-1990: Report on the Process and Responses*, Faith and Order Paper No. 149 (Geneva: WCC, 1990), vii. For an insightful description, albeit cursory, of the BEM process, see especially chap. 2 passim. See also Paul A. Crow, Jr., "The Roman Catholic Presence in the Faith and Order Movement" in *Centro Pro Unione. Semi-Annual Bulletin*, No. 62 (Fall 2002), 11-12; John T. Ford, "The Twentieth – An Ecumenical Century" in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (January 2004), 2-3.

⁵⁷ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982-1990*, §20 passim.

perspectives on the Petrine office, especially in the light of the fact that no conversation on the papal office⁵⁸ *per se* is present within this text.⁵⁹

1.2.2.1. On ministry

The Lima text is a statement on *ministry*. Since Vatican II it became increasingly customary to talk about the papacy as a Petrine ministry, as opposed to a mere office or structure or institution. For this reason, the Lima document provides a helpful and strategic point of departure for Roman Catholics and other churches to dialogue on the papal office as a ministry. The document rightly refers to ministry as a major church-dividing reality in the history of church relations by virtue of the various understandings vis-à-vis its nature, form, and exercise. So, too, the Petrine office is one such obstacle in reference to the divergent views on its nature, form, and exercise. In the light of the text's essence as a ministry document, it indirectly incorporates the papal office as a Petrine ministry at the heart of many sad divisions among the churches.

1.2.2.2. On convergence

The Lima text is a *convergence* statement on ministry. While some differences of opinion may reside around the extent of its representation, its participants included those from virtually all major Christian traditions - Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United, Disciples, Baptist, Adventist and Pentecostal. Given such great diversity among the churches who, nevertheless, managed to find such a significant degree of theological convergence, the text is aptly regarded "as a point of reference and framework" for churches in dialogue.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ At the close of the Plenary Session 1 (Tuesday, January 5), Geoffrey Wainwright offered several concluding remarks on four areas of special concern arising from their debate, one of which was the question of the Petrine office. See *Towards Visible Unity*, Vol. 1: Minutes and Addresses, Commission on Faith and Order (Geneva: WCC, 1982), 82.

⁵⁹ In other words, part 3 of the text - M1-55 - which comprises six divisions: I) The calling of the whole people of God (M1-6); II) The church and the ordained ministry (M7-18); III) The forms of the ordained ministry (M19-33); IV) Succession in the apostolic tradition (M34-38); V) Ordination (M39-50); and VI) Towards the mutual recognition of the ordained ministries (M51-55).

⁶⁰ Cf. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982-1990*, §§22-23.

For this reason, the document brandishes a body of theological tenets on ministry that may potentially deepen understanding and communion between Roman Catholics and other churches on the Petrine ministry. Notwithstanding its problematic facets as a ministry among other churches' forms of ministries, the favourable reception of the document hitherto attests that a potential theological reception of the Petrine ministry by other churches is not beyond reach. For, as the text asserts: "In leaving behind the hostilities of the past, the churches have begun to discover many promising convergences in their shared convictions and perspectives"⁶¹ that "give assurance that despite much diversity in theological expression the churches have much in common in their understanding of the faith."⁶²

1.2.2.3. On objectivity

The Lima text is an *objective* convergence statement on ministry. In other words, it talks about the need for different churches and their accompanying distinctive forms of ministry to be learning institutions. It challenges all churches to a real sense of openness as they review their specific forms of ministry and compare themselves with other churches and their respective forms of ministry. In this regard, it states: "All churches need to examine the forms of ... ministry and the degree to which the churches are faithful to its original intentions. Churches must be prepared to renew their understanding and their practice of ... ministry."⁶³

Here all churches with their accompanying forms of ministry distinctives are placed on level ground, as opposed to directly imposing a judgement on any particular church's ministry. In this way, the document indirectly opens non-papal churches to the reality of possibly learning and gaining from the papal churches, as it provocatively suggests: "Openness to each other holds the possibility that the Spirit may well speak to one church through the insights of another."⁶⁴ The Petrine ministry, in other words, could potentially be received as a gift to other churches – just as much a gift as its absence could be for the Roman church.

⁶¹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, ix.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., M51.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

1.2.2.4. On ordination

The Lima text is an objective convergence statement on ministry with a special regard for the ideals of the *ordained ministry*. It talks about ordained ministry in the context of “persons who have received a charism and whom the church appoints for service by ordination through the invocation of the Spirit and the laying on of hands.”⁶⁵ Such persons assist the Church in the fulfilment of its mission, as well as being “publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus of its unity.”⁶⁶

The Petrine office comes into play more directly in this section by virtue of it being under the ordained ministry, even though the text does not mention it by name. It becomes possible for it to be placed under the ideals of the ordained ministry as identified in the document and critically assessed as an authentic structure of Christian ministry, especially when the text points out the following:

As heralds and ambassadors, ordained ministers are representatives of Jesus Christ to the community, and proclaim his message of reconciliation. As leaders and teachers they call the community to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ, the teacher and prophet, in whom law and prophets were fulfilled. As pastors, under Jesus Christ the chief shepherd, they assemble and guide the dispersed people of God, in anticipation of the coming Kingdom.⁶⁷

1.2.2.5. On the threefold pattern

The Lima text is an objective convergence statement on ministry, with a special regard for the ideals of the ordained ministry and its *threefold pattern*, i.e. episcopal (office of oversight), presbyterial (office of teaching), and diaconal (office of service). The text recommends a return to this threefold pattern of ministry for potentially

⁶⁵ Ibid., M7.

⁶⁶ Ibid., M8.

⁶⁷ Ibid., M11.

greater effectiveness in the practice of ministry, unity and witness.⁶⁸ While not a flawless pattern of ministry, it did find universal acceptance at early stages in theological and ecclesiastical history.⁶⁹ The document implies that this pattern is conceivably present in all churches in one way or another.⁷⁰

For these reasons, the Petrine office as a different and distinct form of ministry starts to overlap and intersect with other forms of ministry within other churches that similarly fulfills an episcopal or leadership role. Given the fact that in recent times Anglicans and Protestants are increasingly convinced of the importance of and need for universal structures of church unity and ministry in the light of an often disjointed and splintered outworking of ministry, and given the fact that the papal office is essentially a ministry of unity, the Petrine office could potentially be recognised and embraced as a much-needed structure at the service of such churches.

1.2.2.6. On the threefold exercise

The Lima text is an objective convergence statement on ministry, with a special regard for the ideals of the ordained ministry and its threefold pattern, which should be exercised in a *personal, collegial, and communal* manner. The document contends:

It should be *personal* because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the Gospel and to call the community to serve the Lord in unity of life and witness. It should also be *collegial*, for there is need for a college of ordained ministers sharing in the common task of representing the concerns of the community. Finally, the intimate relationship between the ordained ministry and the community should find expression in a *communal* dimension where the exercise of the ordained ministry is rooted in the life of the community and requires the community's effective participation in the discovery of God's will and the guidance of the Spirit.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid., M19-25 passim.

⁶⁹ Ibid., M19-20.

⁷⁰ Cf. Ibid., M22, M24.

⁷¹ Ibid., M26.

These convergence statements apply indirectly to the Petrine ministry where the personal, collegial and communal dimensions of the papacy are currently under review. The papal office, if exercised properly, provides an important expression of these three dimensions of ministry and, as such, may potentially be embraced by other Christians as a viable form of ministry.

1.2.2.7. *On episkopè*

The Lima text is an objective convergence statement on ministry, with a special regard for the ideals of the ordained ministry and its threefold pattern, which should be exercised in a personal, collegial, and communal manner, while providing a service of *episkopè*. It highlights the role of *episkopè* (as well as episcopacy) as a necessary gift to the Church as it fulfils the need in the churches for a ministry of leadership and pastoral supervision that stands above local congregations: "...a ministry of *episkopè* is necessary to express and safeguard the unity of the body. Every church needs this ministry of unity in some form in order to be the Church of God, the one body of Christ, a sign of the unity of all in the Kingdom."⁷² Since this role is explicitly carried out by the pope, coupled with the reality of increasing fragmentation and splintering of other denominations,⁷³ the service of *episkopè* in the Petrine ministry could offer an ecumenical opportunity.

1.2.2.8. *On authority*

The Lima text is an objective convergence statement on ministry, with a special regard for the ideals of the ordained ministry and its threefold pattern, which should

⁷² Ibid., M23. This need was singled out in one of the section reports of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order in Santiago de Compostela (1993): "...there is a growing convergence amongst the churches regarding the need for a ministry of oversight (*episkopè*) at all levels in the life of the Church." See "Report of Section III: Sharing a Common Life in Christ" in Thomas F. Best and Gunther Gassmann (Eds), *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Faith and Order Paper No. 166 (Geneva: WCC, 1994), 250, §25. See also "Report of Section II: Confessing the One Faith to God's Glory" in Ibid., 243, §§28-30.

⁷³ In their "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004", David Barrett and Todd Johnson draw attention to this glaring fragmentation and disconnectedness, highlighting the rampant increase in denominationalism during the last century. In 1900 there are 1,880 denominational bodies, compared to 2000 where there are 33,800 distinct and organisationally separate denominations recognisable. More disturbingly telling is that this statistic of denominations is set to almost double to 63,000 by the year 2025. See *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 2004).

be exercised in a personal, collegial, and communal manner, while providing an *authoritative* service of episkopè. The document underlines authority as a necessity in ministry; it should not be trivialised merely because sometimes its purpose and goal are misconstrued in practice. The document offers several insights on its intended use in ministry: “the authority of the ordained ministry is not to be understood as the possession of the ordained person but as a gift for the continuing edification of the body in and for which the minister has been ordained.”⁷⁴ Moreover, it “has the character of responsibility before God and is exercised with the cooperation of the whole community.”⁷⁵

On this basis, the authority of the pope is indirectly incorporated in the document and challenged by several conditions for ministering with authority. His authority is not without accountability to God or others, but demands to be exercised as a responsible gift for *inter alia* the edification of the church and in collegiality. The text cautions:

...ordained ministers must not be autocrats or impersonal functionaries. Although called to exercise wise and loving leadership on the basis of the Word of God, they are bound to the faithful in interdependence and reciprocity. Only when they seek the response and acknowledgement of the community can their authority be protected from the distortions of isolation and domination. They manifest and exercise the authority of Christ in the way Christ himself revealed God’s authority to the world, by committing their life to the community. ...Authority in the Church can only be authentic as it seeks to conform to this model.⁷⁶

1.2.3. A New Methodology: An Invitation by the Pope

Pope John Paul II’s encyclical on ecumenism *Ut Unum Sint*,⁷⁷ released in May 1995 in Rome as the church’s first papal letter on Christian unity, is presently the most important Roman Catholic document behind the new perspectives on the Petrine office by the ecumenical community. The Petrine office surfaces continually in the

⁷⁴ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, M25.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, M16.

⁷⁷ The document, beginning with an Introduction and closing with an Exhortation, comprises the following sections: I) The Catholic Church’s Commitment to Ecumenism; II) The Fruits of Dialogue; III) *Quanta est Nobis Via?*

text in reference to its experiential dynamics as both stumbling block and stepping-stone. The encyclical's ecumenical, ecclesial, and transformational integrity fulfills a pivotal role for assisting Roman Catholics and other churches on the path towards greater understanding, deeper communion, and more effective witness.⁷⁸

1.2.3.1. *Ecumenical integrity*

The papal letter reveals the church's commitment to the ecumenical sojourn in continuity with the ideals of Vatican II and BEM. According to the pope, ecumenism is not an "appendix" in the life of the church, but part of its organic life and one of the pastoral priorities of his pontificate.⁷⁹ Moreover, the decision at Vatican II to engage with other churches is "irrevocable".⁸⁰ In this framework, he talks about the Petrine office not in a polemical, argumentative, or manipulative manner, but rather in a warm, understanding and reconciliatory spirit. His departure point for addressing the Petrine office is the scandal of Christian division for the world at large, which urges the churches to dialogue and work together in response to Jesus' prayer for unity.⁸¹

The encyclical's ecumenical consciousness is particularly discernible in its reflection of the BEM ideals. What was begun at Lima comes to the forefront in this encyclical. The Petrine office is discussed as a ministry rather than an institution or juridical structure (ministry).⁸² The pope highlights various benefits this office can offer other Christians, not just those within Roman Catholicism, but also expresses a serious need to learn from the insights and interaction of other churches (objectivity).⁸³ The pope's ministry occurs within the ecclesial context of the

⁷⁸ Responses from the various ecclesial traditions have already been submitted in some cases, while others are still forthcoming. The PCPCU is involved in a process of receiving these responses for further study and exploration. For a helpful set of responses, see the following: Colin Davey, "*Ut Unum Sint*: Responses within Britain and Ireland to Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Unity" in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4 (1999), 339-346; "Responses from the British and Irish Churches" in *Ibid.*, 346-378.

⁷⁹ *UUS*, §99.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, §3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* passim, but especially §§1-14.

⁸² E.g. *Ibid.*, §§88ff passim.

⁸³ E.g. *Ibid.*, §48, §§82ff passim, §97.

ordained ministry with his manifold responsibilities and duties (ordination)⁸⁴ as an episcopal agent (threefold pattern).⁸⁵

Pope John Paul II pays careful attention to the personal, collegial and communal dimensions of this ministry (threefold exercise).⁸⁶ He underlines the role of the Bishop of Rome as serving in a supervisory capacity for the protection and edification of the body of Christ (episkopè),⁸⁷ while employing the power given to serve in love (authority).⁸⁸ The pope ultimately desires a papacy that is shared by all Christians (convergence).⁸⁹

On the basis of its ecumenical integrity, the encyclical potentially forges renewed attention and perspectives on the Petrine office by other churches. It confronts the churches with the challenge of overcoming the scandal of Christian division based on past hostilities and misunderstandings, and to construct a new path towards deeper understanding and communion in the spirit of humility, confession, and hope for the future.

1.2.3.2. Ecclesial integrity

The papal letter reflects the church's commitment to its own theological distinctives at the service of other Christians. The pope discusses the church's doctrine of the Petrine ministry continually and at length as a fundamental basis of Roman Catholic theology and life. The church's ecumenical consciousness and commitment does not impose a campaign of trivialising the church's distinctive tenets, given the papal office's controversial status in church history. On the contrary, the pope addresses the nature, role and promise of the Petrine office for the church, other churches, and society at large. He wants to underline it as the authentic and propitious ministry the church believes it to be in a manner that will enhance and benefit Roman Catholicism as well as the ecumenical community.

⁸⁴ E.g. Ibid., §97.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ E.g. Ibid., §§88ff passim.

⁸⁷ E.g. Ibid., §97.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., §96.

In this regard, Pope John Paul II highlights various responsibilities of the Petrine office. It “is a specific duty of the bishop of Rome”⁹⁰ to support “the efforts of all who work for the cause of unity”⁹¹ since his mission “is particularly directed to recalling the need for full communion among Christ’s disciples.”⁹² The Bishop of Rome wrestles with human frailty and depends on prayer for his ongoing conversion.⁹³ His “ministry is that of *servus servorum Dei*,” a designation that keeps him accountable in not separating ministry from primacy.⁹⁴ The Petrine ministry is preserved by the church as “her ‘perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity’ and whom the Spirit sustains in order that he may enable all the others to share in this essential good.”⁹⁵

The basis for this ministry rests with the New Testament witness, primarily within the Gospel of Matthew.⁹⁶ It is exercised as “a ministry originating in the manifold mercy of God,”⁹⁷ from which the service of authority is explained.⁹⁸ As “the first servant of unity”⁹⁹ he carries out a service of episkopè in the church,¹⁰⁰ though always in communion with the episcopate and Christian community.¹⁰¹ He has a particular responsibility for the wellbeing of other churches, too.¹⁰²

On the basis of its ecclesial integrity, the encyclical contributes potentially to the changing perspectives on the papacy. Anglican and Protestant churches are not given the challenge of seeking deeper communion and understanding around the papal issue on the expectation that they lose their respective ecclesial distinctives. While they should come to terms with why the papacy was problematic for their

⁹⁰ Ibid., §4.

⁹¹ Ibid., §3.

⁹² Ibid., §4.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., §88.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., §§90-92.

⁹⁷ Ibid., §92.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., §94.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., §95.

¹⁰² See Ibid., where Pope John Paul II states: “As bishop of Rome I am fully aware, as I have reaffirmed in the present encyclical letter, that Christ ardently desires the full and visible communion of all those communities in which, by virtue of God’s faithfulness, his Spirit dwells. I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard, above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.”

tradition, they should also explore how the papal office addresses their theological concerns and hopes. The ecumenical journey involves abandoning exclusivity and striving towards greater inclusivity, though never should it imply unity for unity's sake; that would be a false irenicism.

1.2.3.3. *Transformational integrity*

The papal letter reveals the church's commitment to renewal and reform in the spirit of Vatican II *aggiornamento*.¹⁰³ Motivated "by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation,"¹⁰⁴ the churches "are called to re-examine together their painful past"¹⁰⁵ in a way that encourages an acknowledgement of earlier mistakes and a vision that prepares a path towards greater witness in society.¹⁰⁶ In this regard, the pope practises what he preaches by acknowledging that the papacy "constitutes a difficulty for most other Christians, whose memory is marked by certain painful recollections."¹⁰⁷ In unprecedented fashion, he then asks forgiveness for the necessary responsibility the Roman church must assume.¹⁰⁸ Then, more profoundly, he expresses the ethos of his vision:

This is an immense task, which we cannot refuse and which I cannot carry out by myself. Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea "that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn. 17:21)?¹⁰⁹

On the basis of its transformational integrity, the encyclical confronts Anglican and Protestant churches with a new situation in their understanding of the papal office

¹⁰³ Ibid., §3: "At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself irrevocably to following the path of the ecumenical venture, thus heeding the Spirit of the Lord, who teaches people to interpret carefully the 'signs of the times'."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., §2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., §88.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., §96.

and with a new ecumenical opportunity. The pope has invited them to dialogue together with him on how to renew and reform the Petrine office so that it truly fulfills its intended ministry of unity and truly serves all churches towards greater understanding, deeper communion, and more effective witness in the world.

1.3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The renewed interest in the Petrine office by various post-Reformation churches features as one of the most phenomenal developments in the modern ecumenical movement. If, as Reformed theologian Jean-Louis Leuba observes concerning the ecumenical enterprise, there are “so many areas where what were thought of and experienced as opposing and mutually exclusive possibilities have been seen to have an underlying deeper complementarity,”¹¹⁰ could the same also be said about the Petrine ministry for Anglicans and Protestants? The answer to this question lies within the ambit of this study.

This chapter introduced the problem and promise of the Petrine office against the backdrop of recent contextual, theological and methodological turning points in the contemporary Church. The Second Vatican Council provided a favourable context for shifting the papacy towards a new ecclesiological framework of communion, towards a greater ecumenical scope, towards a greater public orientation, and towards a more human face. The Lima document, which provided theological convergence on ministry, indirectly incorporated the Petrine office onto the agenda of the ecumenical communities as a distinctive form of Christian ministry that comprises both problems and opportunities. The papal encyclical on ecumenism reaffirmed the limitations and merits of the Petrine office, with an unprecedented invitation by the pope to other churches to participate in a new dialogue on the future of the Petrine office.

For this reason, the Petrine office demands renewed attention concerning its problematic and promising aspects as noted by Anglican and Protestant churches in recent decades. The following chapters focus on carefully reviewing *inter alia* what

¹¹⁰ Jean-Louis Leuba, “Papacy, Protestantism and Ecumenism” in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (October 1994), 468.

these churches are saying about the papacy, what ongoing problems as well as potential benefits are identified about the papal office, and whether a communion with the pope is in mind.¹¹¹ On the basis of emerging post-Reformation church perspectives on the papacy, it is apparent that Anglicans and Protestants could potentially recognise and accept the Petrine office as a legitimate and propitious dimension of Christian ministry, though not in its present form or as it presently functions. This study will interact with this claim continually, while also considering the distinctive contribution other churches could potentially offer the Vatican on papal reform.

To proceed with this study, each chapter focuses on a particular ecclesial tradition in which to investigate the problem and promise of the Petrine ministry. Notwithstanding the vast array of Christian traditions, this study restricts itself to the more well-known, universally represented, and growing churches. In this regard, it considers the following churches in their ascending order of openness and reception: Evangelical, Pentecostal, Methodist, Reformed, Lutheran, and Anglican.

The study draws primarily on international bilateral dialogue statements from which to gather its findings, although some findings are available through other resources.¹¹² Some churches say much about the papacy; others say little or nothing. However, all address the question of ministry, which may be employed as a springboard for assessing their potential regard for the ministry of the pope. The profound importance of this study cannot be overstated. At the very least, the longevity and perseverance of this controversial ecclesial structure in history behoves all churches to take it more seriously, as Harvey Cox's own struggle with the Petrine office reveals:

Somehow, as I plunged deeper into history, then theology and the history of religion, it was the sheer persistence and virtual omnipresence (for blessing or for bane) of the papacy, that impressed me. I began to see at least a glimmer of plausibility in the hoary Catholic argument that any institution which has survived that long, despite the fornicators and

¹¹¹ What such a communion precisely means is another important matter to resolve. Cf. Reinhard Frieling, "Communion with, not under the Pope" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 1997), 34-45.

¹¹² See Reinhard Frieling, *Amt: Laie-Pfarrer-Priester-Bischof-Papst*, Ökumenische Studienhefte 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002), passim.

four-flushers who had actually occupied the office, must be taken with some degree of seriousness. If the God of the Bible, as I believe, acts in and through human history, then it has to be conceded that the papacy, and not just in the West, occupies a not inconsiderable chunk of that history.¹¹³

¹¹³ Harvey Cox, "The Papacy of the Future: A Protestant Perspective" in Gary MacEoin (Ed.), *The Papacy and the People of God* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 146-147.

CHAPTER 2

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The new dialogues of the Roman Catholic Church with the Evangelical (and Pentecostal) churches represent a “new situation” in contemporary ecumenism.¹ The growing body of literature concerning their relationship² attests well to their

¹ See Cardinal Walter Kasper, “Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement” in *Information Service* 109 (2002/I-II), 13.

² For a general selection of recent literature on Evangelical-Roman Catholic relations - whether apologetic or ecumenical in tone - see the following books: John Armstrong (Ed.), *Roman Catholicism: Evangelical Protestants Analyze What Divides and Unites Us* (Chicago: Moody, 1994); Keith A. Fournier, with William D. Watkins, *A House United: Evangelicals and Catholics Together: A Winning Alliance for the 21st Century* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994); Norman L. Geisler and Ralph E. MacKenzie, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995); Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (Dallas: Word, 1995); James S. Cutsinger (Ed.), *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997); Thomas P. Rausch (Ed.), *Catholics and Evangelicals: Do They Share A Common Future?* (New York: Paulist, 2000); Dwight Longenecker and John Martin, *Challenging Catholics: A Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue* (Cumbria: Paternoster, 2001); Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus (Eds), *Your Word is Truth: A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Leonardo De Chirico, *Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism*. Religions and Discourse. Vol. 19 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003). See these articles: World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission, “An Evangelical Perspective of Roman Catholicism” in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October 1986), 342-364; “Catholics and Evangelicals in the Trenches” in *Christianity Today*, 38:6 (May 1994), 16-17; Peter Hocken, “Ecumenical Dialogue: The Importance of Dialogue with Evangelicals and Pentecostals” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1994), 101-123; Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, “Relationships with Evangelicals” in *Information Service* 91 (1996/I-II), 44; O.C. Edwards, Jr., “The Far Horizon of Ecumenism: Roman Catholics, Evangelicals and Pentecostals as Potential Partners with the National Council of Churches” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (February 1996), 7-29; Thomas P. Rausch, “The Los Angeles Catholic / Evangelical Dialogue” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (1997), 93-95; George Vandervelde, “Ecclesiology in the Breach: Evangelical Soundings” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1999), 27-50; Jeffrey Gros, “Evangelical Relations: A Differentiated Catholic Perspective” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 2000), 1-9; Daniel P. Moloney, “Evangelicals in the Church of Mary” in *First Things* 108 (December 2000), 13-16; Thomas P. Rausch, “Catholics and Evangelicals in Dialogue: A Catholic Perspective” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2001); Richard J. Mouw, “The Problem of Authority in Evangelical Christianity” in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 124-141; J. Augustine DiNoia, “The Church in the Gospel: Catholics and Evangelicals in Conversation” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 (2004), 58-69.

ever-increasing importance in the ecumenical realm.³ According to World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) secretary, George Vandervelde, the emerging relationship between these two traditions in recent decades is nothing less than “startling” insofar as these “mark a 180 degree turn from the hostile stance that characterised earlier periods (and continues in many sectors of Evangelicalism today).”⁴ Baptist thinker, Ian Randall, refers to the strongly anti-Romanist mood in earlier Protestantism⁵ as a critical factor in giving birth to evangelical bodies for the very purpose of countering Roman Catholicism as a ‘non-Christian’ church and its papacy as an apostate structure.

According to Cardinal Walter Kasper, current president of the PCPCU, these churches have become particularly significant to the Roman Catholic Church and its ecumenical sojourn.⁶ He underlines the vitality and growth of contemporary Evangelicalism, coupled with their striking commonalities and sense of commitment with Roman Catholicism in various doctrinal and ethical matters, notwithstanding prevailing ecclesiological difficulties:

These communities are growing very fast whilst the traditional Protestant churches world-wide are shrinking. In ethical questions they are often nearer to us than to the historical Protestant churches and to the WCC. Often they are committed Christians who take seriously the Biblical message, the Godhead of Jesus Christ and the commandments of God. With some of them we have good dialogues and firm friendships, or at least positive and promising contacts. To be sure, in terms of ecclesiological questions they are distant from us. So necessarily these dialogues have quite a different character Their goal is not the unity of the church but the overcoming of misunderstandings, better mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation where that is possible.⁷

³ An interesting attestation rests with the strong interest (even preference) of various ecumenical journals and publications to publish articles dealing with Evangelicals and Roman Catholics at present. In personal correspondence with one such journal, the Roman Catholic editor stated very clearly that he viewed this dialogue currently as the most important, but which was still undeveloped in the ecumenical arena. It is noteworthy, too, that the very recent ecumenical document *In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity* makes direct reference to the Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions alongside the Roman Catholic Church for their future ecumenical import. See Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), §§67-68.

⁴ See George Vandervelde, “Evangelical-Roman Catholic Relations” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 440-441.

⁵ See Ian Randall, “‘Unity in the Gospel’: Catholic-Evangelical Relationships” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (January 2003), 16.

⁶ See Kasper, “Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement”, *Information Service*, 13-14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

This chapter investigates the ways in which the papal office is treated within this emerging ecumenical discourse between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals. Evangelicals typically have not reflected a fondness for the papacy.⁸ For the most part they constitute those conservative churches within the Anglican and Protestant traditions positioned at the far end of the ecumenical spectrum, i.e. ordinarily suspicious of dialogue with Roman Catholics, averse to the notion that the pope is fulfilling a legitimate and propitious ministry, and indifferent to any discourse on the future of the papal institution.⁹

Many question the Roman Catholic confession of faith and claims of salvation, view the papal office as biblically unwarranted and exclusively problematic in its theological claims and manner of exercise, and denounce any attempt to contribute towards the consolidation of a structure they believe should simply be obliterated. Through an exploration of how contemporary Evangelicals are talking about the Petrine office,¹⁰ this chapter will assess to what extent they still regard it as a major ecumenical scandal for future relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

⁸ Cf. an independent Baptist church in Texas published the following hymn on their website, written by one of its members and sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." See Todd Barker, "The Battle Hymn of the Protestants", at www.biblebelievers.com/Stocker2.html. Accessed 10/03/2003.

Verse 1: The Lord is soon returning all his loved ones he shall find / He will rapture up the Christians and will leave the Pope behind / then Rome shows her true colours and those on earth will find / that the Pope's the Anti-Christ.

Chorus: Glory, Glory, Christ is coming / Glory, Glory, Christ is coming / Glory, Glory, Christ is coming / to destroy the Anti-Christ.

Verse 2: The martyred saints are calling for the vengeance of their blood / and are waiting for the judgement to be sent down by their God / at the bloody whore's destruction how the choirs of heaven will swell / when the Pope is cast in hell.

Verse 3: How Martin Luther will rejoice when he shall see that day / and Latimer and Ridley will be cheering all the way / when the Roman Church is burning at the presence of the Lord / as he wields the Spirit's sword.

Verse 4: Blaspheme not my holy name I can hear Jesus shout / as he tramples down the Vatican and throws the papa out / then the word of God will triumph and will every foe surmount / on Babylon's judgement day.

⁹ For example, John Stackhouse's recent book on various critical issues facing contemporary Evangelicalism does not include any reference to ecumenical discourse on the Petrine ministry, except to refer to issues of papal infallibility and papal authority as longstanding difficulties for Evangelicals. See John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Evangelical Landscapes: Facing Critical Issues of the Day* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 51-52.

¹⁰ Millard Erickson draws attention to the distinction "between charismatic or even Pentecostal evangelicals and non-charismatic evangelicals" and asserts: "The difference between these two groups is significant enough for them sometimes to be treated as separate or alternative groups..." See Millard J. Erickson, "Evangelicalism: USA" in Alister E. McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 188. While Pentecostals are

2.2. THE NATURE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

The ethos of evangelical Christianity revolves primarily around the gospel. While common scholarly approaches to defining the chequered nature¹¹ of this ecclesial tradition are usually of an historical, theological and social-scientific mould, at its basic level lies an unwavering commitment to the Christian gospel which, according to Robert Johnston, consists of “a dedication to the gospel that is expressed in a personal faith in Christ as Lord, an understanding of the gospel as defined authoritatively by Scripture, and a desire to communicate the gospel both in evangelism and social reform.”¹²

Since Christians encounter the dynamics of this gospel in different ways and contexts, Evangelicalism is multifaceted. On the denominational front, Thomas Stransky refers to their preponderance within mainline, confessional, ‘peace’ and free churches, as well as being found among such influences as the ‘Holiness’ tradition and non-denominational bodies such as parachurch groups.¹³ On the theological front, the unifying factor of the gospel permits a generous measure of

included under the broad umbrella of Evangelicalism, the Pentecostal tradition will be treated separately in the following chapter for reasons that should become apparent, especially by virtue of its distinctive theological paradigm and ecclesiology.

¹¹ It is commonplace to find a section devoted to this question of evangelical identity in any academic discussion of evangelicals in article or book form. Christian churches in general tend towards little or no grasp of the identity of Evangelicalism, with a host of misconceptions regarding evangelical faith and practice.

¹² Robert K. Johnston, “American Fundamentalism: An Extended Family” in Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Eds), *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1991), 261. His description complements that of David Bebbington, whose classic definition prevails as a more popular one in use by historians of Evangelicalism, which highlights four specific hallmarks of evangelical Christianity: “biblicism (a reliance on the Bible as ultimate religious authority), conversionism (a stress on the New Birth [conversion]), activism (an energetic, individualistic approach to religious duties and social involvement), and crucicentrism (a focus on Christ’s redeeming work as the heart of essential Christianity). Cited in Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and George A. Rawlyk (Eds), *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University, 1994), 6.

¹³ See Thomas F. Stransky, “A Look at Evangelical Protestantism” in *Theology, News and Notes* 35:1 (March 1988), 24. On their denominational connection, Millard Erickson points out: “Some evangelicals are found within ‘mainline’ denominations – older, more officially liberal groups. Many are found within separate denominations which are distinguished by a clearly evangelical bent. Yet others are independent evangelicals, either members of independent churches or unaffiliated to any local congregation. Another distinction is between charismatic or even Pentecostal evangelicals and non-charismatic evangelicals.” See Erickson, “Evangelicalism: USA” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 188.

legitimate diversity, as Gabriel Fackre's typology of evangelical variety reveals,¹⁴ viz. fundamentalists,¹⁵ old evangelicals,¹⁶ new evangelicals,¹⁷ justice and peace evangelicals,¹⁸ charismatic evangelicals,¹⁹ and ecumenical evangelicals.²⁰

By virtue of their evangelical fissiparousness,²¹ Mark Noll presents an important caveat: "With no formal structure uniting those who share evangelical faith, with evangelicals strewn across multitudes of denominations, with no institutional voice presuming to speak for or to all evangelical Protestants, with deep theological, ecclesiastical, and social differences dividing evangelicals from each other,"²² it is nothing less than "presumptuous to speak casually about a common evangelical attitude to Catholics or to anyone else."²³ In this regard, the variety of perspectives within Evangelicalism on various theological matters is part and parcel of its character, which must be borne in mind especially during an exploration of evangelical perspectives on the papacy.²⁴ As such, any perspectives uncovered in response to the papacy remain a representation of evangelical Christianity as opposed to *the* representation.

2.3. EVANGELICAL – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

¹⁴ See Gabriel Fackre, *Ecumenical Faith in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 22-23.

¹⁵ That is, those who adhere to ultra-inerrancy of the written Word as the criterion of faithfulness and who exhibit a polemical and separatist mentality in faith and life, with the Jerry Falwells as the classic models.

¹⁶ That is, those who stress personal conversion and mass evangelism, with Billy Graham as the classic model.

¹⁷ That is, those who since the 1950s stress the social import of faith and criticise fundamentalist sectarianism, with the periodical *Christianity Today* as the classic expression.

¹⁸ That is, those activist evangelicals who advocate a political agenda at variance with the Religious Right, with Ronald Sider and the journal *Sojourners* espousing its typical tradition and political agenda.

¹⁹ That is, those who advocate the expression of the new birth in second blessings – glossolalia, healing, celebrative worship, and intense group experience.

²⁰ That is, those who tend toward relationships with the larger Christian community, with Charles Colson or Richard Mouw as exemplary figures.

²¹ Gerald McDermott's typology of evangelical categorisation includes that of fissiparousness. See Gerald R. McDermott, *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions? Jesus, Revelation and Religious Traditions* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 37.

²² Mark A. Noll, "The History of an Encounter: Roman Catholics and Protestant Evangelicals" in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, 104.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ For, as Robert Johnston notes: "... evangelical unity has always proven elusive with regard to particular theological issues." See Robert K. Johnston, "Evangelicalism" in Adrian Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 220.

For Evangelicals, ecumenical dialogues with Roman Catholics are distinctive in character and orientation. Firstly, given the plethora of evangelical churches and emphases, their consultations and statements are not attributed with 'official' status (as if any group could rightfully claim to speak on behalf of or to all Evangelicals, and as if these meetings are consistent in frequency and representation). Secondly, given the evangelical ethos of gospel and mission as well as its multifaceted expression of faith, their dialogues do not endeavour towards any kind of structural or organic union. For, as Vandervelde rightly points out, many Evangelicals suspect "that in the dominant quest for the visible unity of the church, institutional and structural issues are displacing the confession and propagation of the central message of the gospel of salvation."²⁵

Thirdly, and in this regard, these conversations pursue theological convergence on the primary tenets of faith for the express purpose of forging common witness. Fourthly, therefore, any ecclesiological matters discussed are situated within a missiological context, i.e. confronted not as mere ecclesiastical issues but rather for their import in either promoting or impeding the witness of the gospel. Fifthly, the Petrine office is not substantially addressed in these consultations as is the case with other Protestant churches in dialogue with the Vatican, but is merely referred to several times for different reasons.

2.3.1. A Brief Overview

Ecumenical discussions between Evangelicals and the SPCU/PCPCU have proceeded through two formal international dialogues. The first dialogue, comprising three meetings between 1977 and 1984, involved official sponsorship by the SPCU and various evangelical representatives participating in an unofficial capacity, which resulted in a 1985 Report entitled *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission* (ERCDOM).²⁶ Participants attained a substantial measure of theological convergence on mission, and regard their Report as being "in no sense

²⁵ George Vandervelde, "Evangelical Ecumenical Concerns" in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 438.

²⁶ See "The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission" in William G. Rusch and Jeffrey Gros (Eds), *Deepening Communion: International Ecumenical Documents with Roman Catholic Participation* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 427-478.

an ‘agreed statement,’ but rather a faithful record of the ideas shared.”²⁷ This consensus was not directed at “the structural unity of churches, but rather with the possibilities of common witness.”²⁸

The second dialogue, which emerged against the background of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions in 1988 and 1990, has completed five consultations through the official coordination of the SPCU/PCPCU and the Task Force on Ecumenism by the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF, now WEA) since 1993, with the release of a 2002 Report entitled *Church, Evangelisation and the Bonds of Koinonia*.²⁹ “The purpose of these consultations,” it states, “has been to overcome misunderstandings, to seek better mutual understanding of each other’s Christian life and heritage, and to promote better relations between Evangelicals and Catholics.”³⁰

Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have also engaged in formal albeit unofficial ecumenical discussions with one another at national level. One notable case in point is the North American dialogue known as the “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT) project, which has progressed since 1992 with the release of Statements on Christian mission (1994),³¹ salvation (1997),³² Scripture and tradition (2002),³³ and the communion of saints (2003).³⁴ These conversations have sought to promote common witness among Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as a fruit of their unity

²⁷ ERCDOM, 430.

²⁸ Ibid., 467. Earlier in the report they state: “It [ERCDOM] was not conceived as a step towards church unity negotiations. Rather it has been a search for such common ground as might be discovered between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics as they each try to be more faithful in their obedience to mission.” Ibid., 429.

²⁹ See “Church, Evangelisation, and the Bonds of *Koinonia*: A Report of the International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (1993-2002)” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (April 2004), 67-94. The dialogue covered the following topics during this period: Scripture, Tradition, and justification (1993); the nature and practice of mission and evangelism (1997); and the nature of the church as communion or koinonia (1993, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002). Hereafter referred to as WEA 2002.

³⁰ Ibid., *Preamble*.

³¹ See “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, xv-xxxiii. Hereafter referred to as ECT 1994.

³² See “The Gift of Salvation” in *First Things* 79 (January 1998), 20-23. Hereafter referred to as ECT 1998.

³³ See “Your Word is Truth: A Statement by Evangelicals and Catholics Together” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Your Word is Truth*, 1-8. Hereafter referred to as ECT 2002.

³⁴ See “The Communion of Saints” in *First Things* (March 2003), 26-32. Hereafter referred to as ECT 2003. For an example of recent articles, see Robert Louis Wilken, “Sanctorum Communio: For Evangelicals and Catholics Together” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (2002), 159-166.

in faith.³⁵ As a supplementary initiative to advance the ecumenical relationship, it envisions their being “Christians together in a way that helps prepare the world for the coming” of Christ and God’s kingdom.³⁶

This section studies these aforementioned dialogue texts for their relevancy regarding the papal office as problem and promise. It analyses these papal references to discern how contemporary Evangelicals are talking about the Petrine ministry in each of the three dialogues, and seeks to draw conclusions concerning the state and future of this controversial institution in ongoing Evangelical-Roman Catholic ecumenical discourse.

2.3.2. The Evangelical Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission, 1977-1984

2.3.2.1. Concerning Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

The Report on two occasions refers directly to Pope Paul VI’s 1975 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* on evangelisation in the modern world.³⁷ In the first case the participants commend it as a foundational factor in making possible the dialogue on mission.³⁸ In the second case they commend it again for the role it played in leading to ERCDOM’s inauguration,³⁹ but in addition affirm it for the evidence it provides “of a growing convergence in our understanding of mission”⁴⁰ and underline it for its worth in their category of “valuable summaries and teaching

³⁵ The ECT co-chairpersons comment on an aspect of the process: “We were determined to take on the hard questions in our disagreements and divisions as evangelicals and Catholics. The arguments were frequently sharp and sometimes painful. We knew that any statement that might come out of this would have to stand up to the most severe critical examination. All of the participants evidenced a robust scepticism about ‘ecumenical’ statements that hedge on important differences. *Again and again it was said that the only unity we could seek, the only unity that is pleasing to God, is unity in the truth*” [italics mine]. See Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, “Introduction” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, xii.

³⁶ Ibid., xiv.

³⁷ Cf. ERCDOM, 429 and 439-440.

³⁸ Ibid., 429.

³⁹ Ibid., 439.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 440.

tools.”⁴¹ The status attributed to this papal text is one that it receives alongside and shares with the important evangelical text of 1974, the *Lausanne Covenant*.⁴²

2.3.2.2. Concerning the role and authority of the magisterium

The Report refers to the roles the pope fulfills in the church’s different interpretative tasks within the context of the affirmation by both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics of “the need for interpretation” in the regulation of Christian belief.⁴³ On being questioned by the evangelical participants on the attributed status and authority “of the various kinds of statements made by those with a ministry of official teaching,”⁴⁴ the Roman Catholics explain “that the function of the *magisterium* is to regulate the formulations of the faith, so that they remain true to the teaching of Scripture.”⁴⁵ They explain further that an important distinction is also drawn vis-à-vis this interpretative task:

On the one hand, there are certain privileged formulations, e.g. a formal definition in council by the college of bishops, of which the pope is the presiding member, or a similar definition by the pope himself, in special circumstances and subject to particular conditions, to express the faith of the church. It is conceded that such definitions do not necessarily succeed in conveying all aspects of the truth they seek to express, and while what they express remains valid, the way it is expressed may not have the same relevance for all times and situations. Nevertheless, for Roman Catholics they do give a certainty to faith. Such formulations are very few, but very important. On the other hand, statements made by those who have a special teaching role in the Roman Catholic Church have different levels of authority (e.g. papal encyclicals and other pronouncements, decisions of provincial synods or councils, etc.). These require to be treated with respect, but do not call for assent in the same way as the first category.⁴⁶

The Report notes the mutually shared belief that “God will protect his church, for he has promised to do so and has given us both his Scriptures and his Spirit,”⁴⁷ and refers to their disagreement as resting with “the means and the degree of his

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Cf. Ibid., 429 and 439.

⁴³ Ibid., 437.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 437-438.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 438.

protection.”⁴⁸ In this regard, whereas Evangelicals emphasise the whole Christian community in this protection, Roman Catholics refer to “the authoritative teaching of the church which has the responsibility for oversight in the interpretation of Scripture, allowing a wide freedom of understanding, but excluding some interpretations as inadmissible because erroneous.”⁴⁹

2.3.2.3. Concerning Pope Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus*

The Report refers to Pope Paul VI's 1974 apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* on the honour of Mary.⁵⁰ The participants are reminded of the controversy and concern this papal text generated for Evangelicals regarding “two expressions in it which, at least on the surface, appeared to them to ascribe to Mary an active and participatory role in the work of salvation.”⁵¹ One expression labelled Mary's motherhood as “salvific” while the other described her as the Redeemer's “worthy associate.”⁵² The Evangelicals shared great concern about this matter, which still continues even after Roman Catholics offered various explanations and assurances.⁵³

2.3.2.4. Concerning the social encyclicals of recent popes

The Report refers to “the social encyclicals of recent popes” in the context of social debate.⁵⁴ In this regard, the participants commend the Roman Catholic Church for having “done noteworthy work”⁵⁵ *inter alia* through these social teachings in response to the “pressing need for fresh Christian thinking about the urgent social issues which confront the contemporary world.”⁵⁶ The Evangelicals recognise that they have much still to learn in this area.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 452.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 454; cf. 453-454.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 470.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Moreover, the participants realise that it is mutually advantageous “to engage in Christian social debate together”⁵⁸ towards a “clear and united Christian witness”⁵⁹ in response to different societal challenges. They are cognisant that “a Christian prophetic voice”⁶⁰ is not always heard, however, and point out that “it should be a single voice which speaks for both Roman Catholics and Protestants.”⁶¹ Elaborating, they suggest:

Such a united witness could also provide some stimulus to the quest for peace, justice, and disarmament; testify to the sanctity of sex, marriage, and family life; agitate for the reform of permissive abortion legislation; defend human rights and religious freedom; denounce the use of torture and campaign for prisoners of conscience; promote Christian moral values in public life and in the education of children; seek to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination; contribute to the renewal of decayed inner cities; and oppose dishonesty and corruption.⁶²

The participants underline the demand for a common mind that will lead to common action, convinced that many areas exist “in which Roman Catholics and Evangelicals can both think together and take action together.”⁶³ For, in the final analysis, they affirm: “Our witness will be stronger if it is a common witness.”⁶⁴

2.3.3. Evangelicals and Catholics Together, 1994-2003

2.3.3.1. Concerning the magisterium

The dialogue refers to “the magisterium (teaching authority) of the community”⁶⁵ among its “points of difference in doctrine, worship, practice, and piety that are frequently thought to divide us.”⁶⁶ It has the papal office in mind as it talks about the ordering and governance of the church “by the bishops in communion with the bishop of Rome, the successor to Peter.”⁶⁷ It highlights the belief that “teaching

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ ECT 1994, xxi.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ ECT 2002, 3. cf. ECT 2003, 30.

authority is invested in the magisterium, namely, the bishop of Rome, who is the successor of Peter, and the bishops in communion with him.”⁶⁸

More specifically, the participants register a lack of agreement “on the exercise of the teaching authority in the life of Christ’s church”⁶⁹ by virtue of evangelical disagreement about such claims as infallibility,⁷⁰ which they categorically label “biblically unwarranted.”⁷¹ The Roman Catholic members suggest that “the Evangelicals have an inadequate appreciation of certain elements of truth that, from the earliest centuries, Christians have understood Christ to have intended for his church; in particular, the Petrine and other apostolic ministries.”⁷² Notwithstanding the variety of problems in the exercise of this governing authority, the participants concede that “there have been variations through history in the exercise of that governance”⁷³ and that “further variations in order to accommodate a fuller expression of Christian unity”⁷⁴ is a future likelihood.

2.3.3.2. Concerning Pope John Paul II’s ministry for religious freedom and human rights

The dialogue refers to Pope John Paul II’s ministry within which the church’s social commitment is readily and credibly discernible. The participants “rejoice together that the Roman Catholic Church - as affirmed by the Second Vatican Council and boldly exemplified in the ministry of John Paul II – is strongly committed to religious freedom and, consequently, to the defense of all human rights.”⁷⁵ They recognise that their “common effort to protect human life”⁷⁶ is by and large the basis for the developing “pattern of convergence and cooperation” between them.⁷⁷

2.3.3.3. Concerning Pope John Paul II’s role in defending historic Christian teachings

⁶⁸ ECT 2002, 6.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid.; Cf. 3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 6; Cf. 7.

⁷² Ibid., 6.

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ ECT 1994, xxiv.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The dialogue refers to Pope John Paul II's role in the important task of preserving the integrity of historic Christian teachings. The statement highlights the respect on the part of Evangelicals "for the way in which the Catholic Church has defended many historic Christian teachings against relativising and secularising trends, and recognise the role of the present pontiff in that important task today."⁷⁸

2.3.3.4. Concerning Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio*

The dialogue refers to Pope John Paul II's 1990 encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* on the mission of the redeemer. The participants commend it for the intimate relation it draws between missionary activity and the expression of unity.⁷⁹ In this regard, the dialogue has been concerned with the one mission of Christ and how it can and should be advanced in diverse ways.⁸⁰ The participants are cognisant of how both communions are prone to elevate their respective ways of advancing the mission of Christ as the sole avenue through which Christians can promote the gospel, which consequently impairs and impedes this one mission.⁸¹ For this reason, the statement retorts:

As is evident in the two thousand year history of the church, and in our contemporary experience, there are different ways of being Christian, and some of these ways are distinctively marked by communal patterns of worship, piety, and catechesis. That we are all to be one does not mean that we are all to be identical in our way of following the one Christ. Such distinctive patterns of discipleship, it should be noted, are amply evident within the communion of the Catholic Church as well as within the many worlds of Evangelical Protestantism.⁸²

2.3.4. The World Evangelical Alliance – Roman Catholic Church Consultation, 1993-2002

2.3.4.1. Concerning the pope as a bond of communion

⁷⁸ ECT 2002, 6.

⁷⁹ ECT 2003, 29.

⁸⁰ ECT 1994, xv and xvii.

⁸¹ Ibid., xvi-xvii.

⁸² Ibid., xxix.

The Report relates its reflection on *koinonia* to the person of the pope as “the successor of Peter and ... the bishops in union with that successor” as a bond of communion within the Roman Catholic Church.⁸³ The unifying agency of the pope and his fellow bishops is understood as “the loving exercise of pastoral authority” within the broader framework of the Holy Spirit’s *proprium*.⁸⁴ For other Christians, who are not visibly governed in this way, Roman Catholics concede nevertheless “many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside her visible structure”.⁸⁵

For this reason, while other Christians are not in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church - especially as expressed in their non-recognition of or non-communion with the Petrine office - still they remain in a real albeit imperfect communion with the Roman Catholic Church because “some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church”.⁸⁶ Pope John Paul II himself has continually affirmed this perspective.⁸⁷ The Roman Catholic participants seek to make clear that their concept of *koinonia* is one that is not “measured by outward and visible means alone because communion depends on the reality of life in the Spirit.”⁸⁸

Evangelicals, no doubt, point out that the most important bond of communion resides not in visible structures, but emerges directly from “the life of the Spirit

⁸³ WEA 2002, §12; cf. *LG*, §8.

⁸⁴ WEA 2002, §13. Whereas evangelicals view the local church as a congregation in a specific setting, Roman Catholics regard it as “a diocese, composed of a number of parishes, with a bishop at the centre, assisted by his presbyters and other ministers of pastoral service to the faithful for the sake of the Gospel” (§24). More specifically, Roman Catholics understand the work of the Holy Spirit to be expressed in, *inter alia*, “the understanding of bishops as successors to the apostles; ... and the gradual acknowledgement of the effective leadership of the bishop of Rome within the whole Church” (§25). In this light, they note: “Even from early times, the Bishop of Rome had a prominent role in fostering the communion of local churches over which bishops presided, the initial expressions of a primacy that developed over the centuries. Since Vatican II there has been greater stress on the mutual relationship between the local churches and the church of Rome” (§25). For further elaboration, cf. §29.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, §12; cf. *LG* §8.

⁸⁶ WEA 2002, §14; cf. *UR*, §3.

⁸⁷ WEA 2002, §15; cf. *UUS*, §11.

⁸⁸ WEA 2002, §16.

which flows from union with Christ”,⁸⁹ which *then becomes* “foundational for the visible expression of the oneness or *koinonia* of all Christians.”⁹⁰ “The visibility of the church,” they emphasise, “is subordinate to this primary truth.”⁹¹

2.3.4.2. Concerning the papacy of the sixteenth century

The consultation clarifies the Reformers’ attitude to the Petrine office as follows: “The sixteenth century reformers did not deny the presence of elements of the true church in Roman Catholicism. Though at times Luther spoke of the pope as anti-Christ, he recognised remnants of the church in the Roman Communion.”⁹² Similarly, Calvin acknowledged “traces (*vestigia*), remnants (*reliquias*), marks (*symbola*), and signs (*signa*) of the church under the papacy.”⁹³ In other words, the likes of Luther and Calvin did not categorically and wholly repudiate the papal office; reservations rested with the manner of its exercise.

2.3.4.3. Concerning Pope Pius XII’s *Mystici corporis Christi*

The Report refers to Pope Pius XII’s description of the church as “both a mystical union and an organised society”⁹⁴ which draws attention to the nature of the church as “both visible and invisible, mystical and hierarchical.”⁹⁵ The pope’s teaching played an important part in Vatican II’s *Lumen Gentium*, where the visible and invisible dimensions of the church are placed in what is understood to be its proper perspective, i.e. “for the Council the visible dimension serves the invisible dimension of the Church. The church is divinely endowed with doctrines, sacraments, and ministries for the purpose of bringing about and signifying a supernatural communion of life, love, and truth among the members”.⁹⁶ In this way, the papal and other ecclesial ministries are underlined for their structural or visible role towards *koinonia*.

⁸⁹ Ibid., §17.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., §21.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Cf. Ibid., §37.

⁹⁵ Ibid., §38.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Evangelicals of the dialogue lean more towards the church as “primarily a community of persons and only secondarily an institution.”⁹⁷ Nevertheless, “most Evangelicals emphatically maintain the requirement of order and discipline and affirm the institutional dimension of church life.”⁹⁸ For this reason, the Report acknowledges “a convergence in the understanding of the way that order and discipline serve the *koinonia* of the church”⁹⁹ that offers great promise for the continuing dialogue between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, and especially for how it relates to the papal office as a visible structure of ministry for facilitating order and discipline towards deeper communion.

2.3.4.4. Concerning Pope John Paul II on reconciliation and witness

The Report highlights the urgency of reconciliation between Christian communities in the light that “God intends that the Church be the main instrument for the *koinonia* of all peoples in God.”¹⁰⁰ Given the shortcomings of the churches in working together in evangelisation, Pope John Paul II asks forgiveness on behalf of Roman Catholics for sins against unity.¹⁰¹ The pope’s awareness of competitive forms of evangelisation is of particular concern.¹⁰² The dialogue participants note: “In the person of Pope John Paul II the Catholic Church has recognised and apologised for the violations of justice and charity for which its members have been responsible in the course of history.”¹⁰³

Moving beyond repentance and convergence, the pope’s challenge of common witness is underlined for its motivational import for current relations between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: “How indeed can we proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation between Christians?”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Ibid., §40.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., §41.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., §57.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Ibid., §§60ff.

¹⁰² Cf. Ibid., §68.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ibid., §75.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Ibid., §80.

2.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE EVANGELICAL – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

Kasper's earlier statement, in which he updates the delegates of the PCPCU on their activities with other churches, draws attention to the underlying state of affairs in the developing Evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue. While "good dialogues and firm friendships, or at least positive and promising contacts"¹⁰⁵ with some Evangelicals exist, "in terms of ecclesiological questions they are distant from us."¹⁰⁶ By implication, therefore, "these dialogues have quite a different character.... Their goal is not the unity of the church, but the overcoming of misunderstandings, better mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation where that is possible."¹⁰⁷

Some concluding remarks are now offered regarding the problem and promise of the Petrine ministry in respect of the evangelical perspectives, with special consideration given to those signs of stuckness and signs of hope that should form the basis for concretely advancing the theological and ecumenical discourse among Evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the immediate future.

2.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

The analysis of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic texts reveals that Evangelicals continue to struggle with certain aspects of the doctrine and praxis of the papal institution. These include the high interpretive status attributed to the pope as magisterial authority within Roman Catholicism, especially insofar as it involves the claim of infallibility; the existence of some prevailing perplexing teachings of the papacy, such as those that attribute to Mary a distinctive status and role in salvation; the high regard for visible structures, such as the office of the Bishop of Rome, as a bond of communion in the church; and the perennial concern with the manner of the exercise of the papacy. Implicit here are the broader problems of the ministerial authority of the pope, the relation between Scripture and Tradition within the

¹⁰⁵ Kasper, "Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement", *Information Service*, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. For an overview of "free church" ecclesiology, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2002), 59-67.

¹⁰⁷ Kasper, "Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement", *Information Service*, 13.

schema of the papal institution, and the role of the Bishop of Rome in respect of the nature of ecclesiality.

The underlying factor within this stuckness, however, rests with the problem of ecclesiological incongruency on the part of Evangelicals. The doctrine of the papacy does not quite fit into the theological pastures with which Evangelicals are familiar (as Margaret O’Gara’s story analogically reflects of a farmer who visits the local zoo, sees a giraffe, stares at it in incredulous amazement, then shakes his head firmly and declares, “I just don’t believe it!”)¹⁰⁸ Evangelical theologian Richard Mouw relates to the prevailing evangelical *angst* in more personal terms in the following description: “I feel like someone attending a family gathering after having lived for a long time away from home. My relatives are discussing matters of disagreement that I know little about ... I don’t know exactly how to enter into the arguments, but neither can I convince myself that the discussions are none of my business.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, he asserts, “we [do not] hold to the kinds of ecclesiological views that fit easily within the categories that are taken for granted”¹¹⁰ by Roman Catholics, hence the evangelical difficulty in accessing the Petrine dialogue.

2.4.1.1. The problem of a sophisticated ecclesiology

Evangelical ecclesiology is less sophisticated than that of Roman Catholicism, and seems unable to procure accommodation for the complex ecclesiastical structure of the papacy. This varying emphasis has led to the evangelical doctrine of the church being labelled “neglected”¹¹¹ or “weak,”¹¹² although Richard John Neuhaus puts this less sophisticated framework in proper perspective by pointing out that in “the classical Reformation traditions of Luther and Calvin, the central concern was to contend for a certain understanding of the gospel; it was not to repudiate the orthodox ecclesiology that was historically understood to be an integral part of

¹⁰⁸ See Margaret O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), 174.

¹⁰⁹ Mouw, “The Problem of Authority in Evangelical Christianity” in Braaten and Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity & the Papal Office*, 124.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ For example, see Donald G. Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 127; Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 165.

¹¹² For example, see George Vandervelde, “Ecclesiology in the Breach: Evangelical Soundings” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1999), 28.

orthodox dogma and doctrine.”¹¹³ In other words, Evangelicals are not insouciant about matters of the church,¹¹⁴ but rather have a simpler ecclesiological infrastructure within which no apparent avenue leading to a papal office is readily discernible.¹¹⁵

2.4.1.2. The problem of a strict ecclesiology

Evangelical ecclesiology does not include the Petrine see as a primary constituent for its ecclesiality, which is in contradistinction to the Roman Catholic strict ecclesiology that categorically demands communion with the Bishop of Rome for legitimacy. According to Avery Dulles, Roman Catholics conceive of the church “as a communion having its centre in the Petrine see,”¹¹⁶ which was authoritatively addressed by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in its 1992 letter *Communio in Notio* and, more recently, in its 2000 declaration *Dominus Iesus*.

Geoffrey Wainwright summarises the notorious paragraph of the latter text as follows:

... [it] reasserted that the one church of Christ “subsists in” the Roman Catholic Church, while churches that have “apostolic succession and a valid eucharist” but are not in perfect communion with the Roman Catholic Church are considered to be “true particular churches”, in which the church of Christ is “present and operative”; other “ecclesial communities”, without “the valid episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the eucharist”, “are not churches in the proper sense”, although the baptised in them “are in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the church”.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Richard John Neuhaus, “The Catholic Difference” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, 198.

¹¹⁴ David Bebbington elaborates: “historically, evangelicalism is not committed to any particular theory of the church, regarding the New Testament as being open to a number of interpretations in this respect, and treating denominational distinctives as of secondary importance to the gospel itself. This does not mean that evangelicals lack commitment to the church, as the body of Christ; rather, it means that evangelicals are not committed to any one *theory* of the church.” See David W. Bebbington, “Evangelicalism” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 183.

¹¹⁵ On general comments on the difficulty of dialogue with Christians for whom the reality and concept of church is not central, see Hocken, “Ecumenical Dialogue”, *One in Christ*, 112-113.

¹¹⁶ Avery Dulles, “Communion” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 231.

¹¹⁷ Geoffrey Wainwright, “Church” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 180. For ecumenical critiques on this declaration, see Thomas P. Looney, “*Dominus Iesus*: Appreciation, Critique and Hope” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (May 2001), 1-9; Vincent P.

Evangelicals also conceive of the church according to strict criteria, such as the classic “born again” experience that they ordinarily employ to assess the ecclesiality of other churches.¹¹⁸ However, the key point is that for Evangelicals the Church is defined on soteriological grounds, thus it is not a communion of believers with a defined relationship to the pope. The papacy thus poses a significant problem for Evangelicals in that it does not feature as a matter of central ecclesiological importance. While Roman Catholics communicate a doctrine of the church in which the papal office is part of the church’s very essence, Evangelicals are in general directly opposed to this notion, though open in a few quarters to the papal office being of potential value to the church’s well-being.

2.4.1.3. The problem of a sacramentalist ecclesiology

Evangelicals share a more ‘instrumental’ ecclesiology as opposed to that of Roman Catholic sacramentalism, and see the church as a vehicle for witness rather than grace, as Jeffrey Gros points out: “In the Evangelical world, there is often an instrumental ecclesiology which sees Church as a voluntary association for mission, a vehicle for certain witness – sometimes in public policy debates, at other times in evangelistic mission, or a support group for the born again.”¹¹⁹ Moreover, Evangelicals are more concerned with right living as opposed to sacramentalist and structural matters.¹²⁰

Such an ecclesiology “makes relationships [with Evangelicals] a challenge”,¹²¹ according to Gros, who opts for the ‘deeper’ Roman Catholic sacramentalist ecclesiology: “The Church is not merely for mission, be that a social policy or evangelistic outreach, but it has a sacramental and creedal reality, as Catholics read

Branick, “‘*Dominus Iesus*’ and the Ecumenical Dialogue with Catholics” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Fall 2001), 412-431; Jared Wicks, “The Significance of the ‘Ecclesial Communities’ of the Reformation” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 11 (December 2001), 10-13.

¹¹⁸ On general comments on the refusal to acknowledge non-Evangelicals as Christians and to recognise their churches as Christian churches, see Hocken, “Ecumenical Dialogue”, *One in Christ*, 109-111.

¹¹⁹ Gros, “Evangelical Relations”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

¹²⁰ See Harriet A. Harris, “Evangelical Theology” in Trevor A. Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 199.

¹²¹ Gros, “Evangelical Relations”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

Scripture and the faith of the Church through the ages.”¹²² To reject this divine dimension is to deny the uniqueness of the church, *a fortiori* “to denature the Church”,¹²³ as Vandervelde points out: “This ‘anti-sacramentalist’ approach appears to reduce the Church to a sociological unity and its ministry to a functional arrangement.”¹²⁴

In this regard, Avery Dulles’ classic enumeration of church models is resourceful for grasping the ecclesiological inconsistencies among either communion. He points out that both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics take seriously such biblical images of the Church as the Body of Christ, but explicate it differently:

Catholics tend to interpret the Body of Christ on the analogy of a physical organism in which the members receive supernatural life from the Holy Spirit as soul of the Church. Christ, they believe, perpetuates his presence in his Body through the indwelling Spirit. Evangelicals see the Body more in contrast to the Head, as the congregation of believers who are drawn into moral and social fellowship “by faith alone.” With some oversimplification one may say that for Catholics the Church as “mother” begets its members and is prior to them, whereas for Evangelicals the members are prior to the Church: after having been personally converted, they come together into assemblies or congregations and by so doing constitute the Church.¹²⁵

Given these different approaches, it is not hard to understand how the models of sacrament and mystical communion dominate Roman Catholicism, while the models of herald and community of disciples dominate Evangelicalism. Dulles elaborates on the Roman Catholic and evangelical situations respectively:

The Church may be called a sacrament insofar as Christ continues to be really and effectually present in it, making himself visible under a form not his own. The Church contains Christ and actively mediates his grace, bringing the members into a unique mystical communion. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, the members are progressively drawn more deeply into the divine life through worship and contemplation.¹²⁶

¹²² Ibid., 3.

¹²³ Vandervelde, “Ecclesiology in the Breach”, *One in Christ*, 41.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Avery Dulles, “Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue” in Rausch (Ed.), *Catholics and Evangelicals*, 102.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

For Evangelicals ... Salvation, they believe, is achieved not so much through sacramental participation as through faith in the word of God. The chief business of the Church is to preach the biblical message of redemption and thereby form the community of disciples. The members of the community rest their hope of salvation on Christ as proclaimed in the gospel.¹²⁷

For Roman Catholics, the Petrine office is active in the church in this mediation of grace and through whom Christ is present, which indeed creates room for the belief in the pope's authoritative status and infallibility claim, given the reality of Christ's promised presence within the office of ministry. This no doubt is worrisome for Evangelicals who, for the most part as non-sacramentalists, view this way of thinking as verging on idolatry and as compromising on their confidence in Christ alone. On this basis, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics experience great ecclesiological tension in how they view one another's structures and forms of ministry.

2.4.1.4. The problem of a Scripture-in-Tradition ecclesiology

Evangelicals and Roman Catholics also wrestle with one another on the legitimacy of the papal office in the church by virtue of their differing views of revelation.¹²⁸ Put simply, Evangelicals have historically questioned its legitimacy and the legitimacy of its claims on the basis that a biblical warrant does not exist and that, in fact, the papal institution is a relatively late development.¹²⁹ Evangelical theologian Timothy George explains: "For evangelicals the principle of *sola Scriptura* means that all the teachings, interpretations, and traditions of the church must be subjected to the divine touchstone of Holy Scripture itself."¹³⁰

David Bebbington points out that although the evangelical movement refrained from allowing merely "any specific ecclesiology to be seen as normative," Evangelicals readily honoured "those that are clearly grounded in the New Testament and

¹²⁷ Ibid., 103.

¹²⁸ For a resourceful discussion, see the various articles on Scripture and tradition, in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Your Word is Truth*.

¹²⁹ For example, see James I. Packer, "Crosscurrents among Evangelicals" in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, 162.

¹³⁰ Timothy George, "Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology" in Rausch (Ed.), *Catholics and Evangelicals*, 140.

Christian tradition.”¹³¹ The fact that the papal office emerged, as they posit, *beyond* the biblical territory, clearly paved the way for an evangelical repudiation of the office as a divinely willed structure of Christian ministry.

On the contrary, Roman Catholics assert its rightful place on the basis of a different interpretation of Scripture, but especially by employing their understanding of Scripture-in-tradition. Dulles explains the Roman Catholic philosophy of revelation as one that “views tradition as an indispensable vehicle for the transmission of revelation.”¹³² He elaborates:

While revering Scripture as containing the word of God in unalterable form, she [the Roman Catholic Church] denies that Scripture is sufficient in the sense that the whole of revelation could be known without tradition. Most Catholic theologians today would hold that every revealed truth is in some way attested by Scripture, but that some revealed truths are not explicitly mentioned by any texts in Scripture. ... Tradition hands on the word of God in such a way that it can be grasped by the faithful of every time and place.¹³³

As concerns emerge about a particular church structure around its biblical and theological grounds, Evangelicals inevitably repudiate its authenticity as a ministry of authority for the churches, notwithstanding the apparent good that might exude from such a structure. For, as James Packer asserts,

Bowling to Peter among the apostles as having definitive personal and pastoral authority over all the congregations, in the way that Roman Catholicism today makes acceptance of the papacy a defining mark of Catholic identity, is not however part of the New Testament picture. Nor does the fact that John Paul II is a wonderful man who has done a wonderful job as a world Christian ambassador make the papacy a credible institution or the Catholic claim to conciliar and *ex cathedra* infallibility at all plausible.¹³⁴

2.4.2. Signs of Hope

¹³¹ Bebbington, “Evangelicalism” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 183.

¹³² Dulles, “Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Your Word is Truth*, 57.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ James I. Packer, “Crosscurrents among Evangelicals” in Colson and Neuhaus (Eds), *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, 162.

The analysis of the dialogue texts reveals that Evangelicals increasingly are talking about the office and work of the pope in positive terms. They refer to the pope as one who cares deeply about the evangelisation of the modern world; that his theological writings are insightful and resourceful in aiding Evangelicals to find with Roman Catholics theological convergence on mission as well as a new impulse for common witness; that his theological teachings are particularly helpful in better equipping Evangelicals to understand their social and prophetic witness as they wrestle with how to confront the contemporary world with the good news of salvation; that he practises what is preached in the public domain, especially concerning issues of religious freedom and human rights; and that he takes seriously the integrity of the Gospel, especially in defending historic Christian teachings against various external threats.

The ERCDOM theologians rejoiced that their theological exchanges increased mutual understanding and the discovery of common theological ground for the purpose of being “more faithful in their obedience to mission.”¹³⁵ The ECT theologians gave thanks that their dialogues toward solidarity in mission were grounded in the gospel, which deepened their understanding of their common faith.¹³⁶ The WEA theologians referred to their experience in dialogue as “momentous”, and have increasingly come to terms with the fact that in their relationship with Roman Catholics there is more that unites them than that which divides.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ ERCDOM, 429. The dialogue treated the following theological areas in their relation to the gospel and mission: Revelation and Authority (431-39), The Nature of Mission (439-444), The Gospel of Salvation (444-454), Our Response in the Holy Spirit to the Gospel (455-459), The Church and the Gospel (460-462), The Gospel and Culture (463-467), and The Possibilities of Common Witness (467-474).

¹³⁶ Cf. ECT 2003, 26-27 passim.

¹³⁷ See WEA 2002, 1. According to Cecil M. Robeck, Evangelicals and Roman Catholics share much in common: “a commitment to Scripture,” “to the reality of the Virgin Birth, the reality of sin, the need for salvation which is available only through what God has done in Christ Jesus, to the necessity of faith in the process of salvation, to the need for conversions, indeed, for multiple conversions or rededications.” Other points of commonality include their belief “in the reality of miracles today,” “in the reality of heaven and hell, in the judgement yet to come, in the resurrection of the body, and in the bodily return of Jesus from heaven.” See Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” in Rausch (Ed.), *Catholics and Evangelicals*, 29. Also, when the world famous Baptist preacher and evangelist W.A. Criswell met with Pope Paul VI in 1971, he encountered a barrage of criticisms from those within his Evangelical family. Since Baptists are not quite fond of the papal office, it is quite understandable that Criswell was rebuked for being “involved in apostasy.” His response was most telling. “I’m not a Catholic...and I couldn’t be,” he remarked, “but I thank God for what they have done to name the name of Christ in the world. I would be more comfortable praying with a Catholic priest who believes in the Virgin Birth, the blood Atonement, and the deity of Christ

The renowned evangelist Billy Graham is a noteworthy case in point of how some Evangelicals regard the pope more seriously than they tend to admit.¹³⁸ Graham has on numerous occasions commended recent popes such as Pope John XXIII as one who “brought a new era to the world,” Pope John Paul II as “the greatest religious leader of the modern world, and one of the greatest moral and spiritual leaders of this century” who “bases his work and messages and vision on biblical principles.”

Another example is found in the Pentecostal ecumenist Cecil M. Robeck. Recalling Pope John Paul II’s visit to Israel and Palestine in 2000 during which he highlighted the plight of Christians in the Middle East as well as the church’s past sins against both Jews and Muslim, Robeck remarks: “I think that only the Pope could have done what he did in that region, and in that moment, I am proud to think of him as standing as *my representative to those people*.”¹³⁹

For such reasons, not a few Evangelicals are becoming increasingly open to a new future in conversation with Roman Catholics concerning the promise of the Petrine office for evangelical life and ministry. They refer to their need to still learn much in the area of social witness and to engage together with Roman Catholics in united witness in response to different public challenges, and then underline the value of a single prophetic voice that could speak for both Protestants and Roman Catholics in the light of complex societal needs such as justice and peace, sanctity in marriage, family well-being, human rights and religious freedom, and so on. Given their appreciation for the role of the popes in social matters, Evangelicals have possibly identified an important and critical role of the pope that they might be open to affirming and recognising as an acceptable and propitious ministry.

They refer to the requirement to maintain order and discipline in serving the *koinonia* of the churches, which attributes a potentially acceptable status to the pope

than with a liberal Protestant who doesn’t.” See Timothy George, “The ‘Baptist Pope’” in *Christianity Today* (March 2002), 56-57.

¹³⁸ The following website refers to Billy Graham’s remarks about the pope, albeit in derogatory terms and with intentions of defaming his name and credibility as an evangelical leader and representative. This notwithstanding, it is quite resourceful. See Walid, “Billy Graham love affair with the Pope”, at www.bycovenant.com/billy_graham_love_affair_with_pope.html. Accessed 10/03/2003.

¹³⁹ Cited in Clint Le Bruyns, “A Pentecostal and the Pope” in *Today* magazine (February 2001), 62.

as facilitator of order and discipline towards deeper communion. They refer to the teaching import of the popes, thus identifying a potential recognition and acceptance of the pope in theological and ethical matters. They refer to their emerging understanding that the Reformers repudiated the historical exercise of the papacy, not so much the existence of the papal office; in so doing Evangelicals potentially identify the value of their participation in papal reform.

2.4.3. Concluding Remarks

The papacy is extremely problematic for Evangelicals. By virtue of their position at the far end of the ecumenical spectrum, they represent a tradition that is least qualified - in terms of their current marginal- or non-involvement in this dialogue - to provide a substantial contribution to the current Petrine dialogue. For this reason, they have need of learning from Anglican and various Protestant churches as these groups dialogue on the papacy in the ensuing years, as well as from Roman Catholics who understand the Petrine ministry through the new lens of Vatican II, in order that future evangelical participation in the Petrine dialogue is fair, objective, and constructive on the ecumenical terrain. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of the Gospel, the case for Evangelical participation and reception could possibly be advanced.

CHAPTER 3

PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In October 1995, Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders were among a group of religious representatives who met collectively and personally with Pope John Paul II during his visit to New York City. In a telephone interview with *The Associated Press* shortly thereafter, Charismatic leader Pat Robertson remarked about the pope: “He’s got great humility and spirituality; that’s what people admire about him.”¹ In a *New York Times* report, Robertson added, “We all admire the Holy Father tremendously. We all want to build bridges with the Catholic Church.”

Another Pentecostal leader and theologian, Cecil M. Robeck, is the co-chair of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue and has had several audiences with the pope. Reflecting on his relationship with the pope, Robeck remarks: “In my estimation, John Paul II lives up to his own motto. He is a servant of the servants of God. But more than that, he is a deeply spiritual individual who regularly reminds us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”²

The dialogues of the Roman Catholic Church with the Pentecostal churches represent a promising development in contemporary ecumenism. The fact that this conversation takes place between the world’s largest Christian church (Roman Catholicism) and the world’s fastest growing Christian group (Pentecostalism) is a telling case in point.³ Their relationship, especially in Latin America, has notoriously

¹ Cited in David W. Cloud, “Charismatic and Evangelical Leaders Meet with the Pope” at www.ncinter.net/~ejt/wc13.htm. Accessed 10/03/2003.

² Cited in Clint Le Bruyns, “A Pentecostal and the Pope” in *Today* magazine (February 2001), 62.

³ This fact is consistently highlighted as a point of significance for understanding and appreciating the relationship between the two communions. See, for example, Frederick M. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church Is Ecumenical and What She Is Doing About It* (Franklin: Sheed & Ward, 1999), 174.

been characterised by hostility, competitiveness, aggressive proselytism, and even violence. That there are those now within the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal communions committed to dialogue and engagement with one another is a reason for ecumenical hope. According to Pentecostal ecumenists Robeck and Jerry L. Sandidge, “the encounters provided by the Dialogue have been lessons in spiritual growth for participants on both sides, and the fruit of their labour is only just emerging as the church begins its third millennium.”⁴

The abovementioned church leaders, who engage with Roman Catholicism and the pope, are clear exceptions within Pentecostalism.⁵ Pentecostal churches still wrestle with the validity of ecumenical pursuits, the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic Church as a *bona fide* Christian church, and especially the authenticity of the papal office as a genuine structure and ministry within Christianity. For these reasons, also, the earnest efforts through the dialogue are particularly noteworthy.

This chapter investigates the ways in which the papal office is treated within this ecumenical conversation between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals. Roman Catholics will acknowledge that the papacy has not been without its problems over the centuries; Pentecostals would utter its verdict more plainly and say that the papal office has been anything but good! Given the emerging situation where its nature is increasingly being viewed in a more pastoral and ecumenical way, this chapter explores to what extent, if any, this situation is discernible within Pentecostalism among those ecumenically engaged.

3.2. THE NATURE OF PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY

⁴ C.M. Robeck Jr. and J.L. Sandidge, “Dialogue, Roman Catholic and Classical Pentecostal” in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 581.

⁵ Pentecostal ecumenists engaged in theological conversation with Roman Catholicism include Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Frank Macchia, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Simon Chan, Ron Kydd, Harold Hunter, François P. Möller, Russel P. Spittler, Jerry L. Sandidge, Juan Sepulveda, and Matthew Clark. Of particular importance in recent and continuing ecumenical work with Roman Catholics and the pope is Robeck, co-chair of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue since 1991.

Pentecostal Christianity, while arguably a variety of evangelicalism,⁶ is itself a distinct and separate movement of renewal in the Holy Spirit. Juan Usma Gómez explains that “Pentecostalism did not result from some internal division or separation of a particular church or ecclesial community”, but arose within the evangelical atmosphere of the ‘Holiness Movement’ “as a movement characterised by a spiritual experience whose distinguishing features reflected and/or recalled the biblical description of Pentecost (Acts 2), and that also underwent the charismatic manifestations mentioned specifically by the Apostle Paul... (1 Cor 12).”⁷ Owing to the suspicion, ridicule, rejection, and doctrinal disputes associated with how other Christian communities regarded the first Pentecostals, they were compounded to break away and distinguish themselves from other Christians.⁸

In this regard, three waves of development or expansion are usually employed to outline the distinctiveness of this brand of Christianity. The first generation of Pentecostals, that of Classical Pentecostalism, consists of those “members of the major, explicitly Pentecostal denominations ... whose major characteristic is a rediscovery and new experience of the supernatural, with a powerful and energising ministry of the Holy Spirit in the realm of the miraculous”.⁹ They interpret it “as a rediscovery of the spiritual gifts of NT times and their restoration to ordinary Christian life and ministry.”¹⁰

The second generation of Pentecostals, that of Neo-Pentecostalism or Charismatics, consists of those Christians who “describe themselves as having been renewed in the Spirit and experiencing the Spirit’s supernatural, miraculous, and energising

⁶ For example, cf. Gabriel Fackre, *Ecumenical Faith in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 22-23; Millard J. Erickson, “Evangelicalism: USA” in Alister E. McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 188 and 191; Robert K. Johnson, “Evangelicalism” in Adrian Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 218; R.V. Pierard and W.A. Elwell, “Evangelicalism” in Walter A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 408; Peter Hocken, “Pentecostals” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 901.

⁷ Juan Usma Gómez, “Catholics and Pentecostals: Challenges and Possibilities” in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002. Articles by Members of the Staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Vatican City* (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 43.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ D.B. Barrett and T.M. Johnson, “Global Statistics” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 290.

¹⁰ Ibid.

power,”¹¹ but who “remain within – and form organised renewal groups within – their older mainline, non-pentecostal denominations rather than leaving to join Pentecostal denominations.”¹² The third generation of Pentecostals, that of Neo-Charismatism, consists of those Christians who share in many of the abovementioned experiences of the Spirit, but who “leave their mainline, neo-pentecostal denominations yet do not identify themselves as either pentecostals or charismatics.”¹³ They make up thousands of independent charismatic churches that, numbering more than the first two waves combined, are usually labelled “Independent, Post-denominationalist, Restorationist, Radical, Neo-Apostolic, or the ‘Third Wave’ of the 20th-century Renewal.”¹⁴

The ethos of Pentecostal Christianity, amidst its great diversity, rests primarily with the experience of the Holy Spirit, according to various theologians.¹⁵ Matthew Clark *et al* posit: “To be Pentecostal primarily presupposes that one partakes of the common Pentecostal experience”.¹⁶ Moreover, “The Pentecostal does not merely believe or confess he is Pentecostal – he knows it and lives it, because of the experience he has had and is continually undergoing.”¹⁷ The fact that “every Pentecostal life should include the experience termed conversion, baptism of the Spirit, charismata, sanctification, enthusiastic worship and witness, is axiomatic without exception to every Pentecostal community. These things may not be negotiated.”¹⁸

This experiential nature of Pentecostal Christianity is not one of neutrality. On the contrary, its experiential orientation directs its members toward holiness and

¹¹ Ibid., 291.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For example, Andrew Walker points out that “despite wide differences in organisation, style, social class and doctrine..., the experiential dimension of the many Pentecostal movements appears remarkably constant. ‘Happy clapping’, tambourine banging, snake handling and leg lengthening are just some of the many subcultural and epiphenomenal variations in Pentecostal practice, but essentially it is the conviction that modern Christians can be infused with the power of the Holy Spirit in ways similar to the disciples of the New Testament that is the distinctive flavour of charismatic Christianity.” See Andrew Walker, “Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 428.

¹⁶ Matthew S. Clark, Henry I. Lederle, et al., *What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Pretoria: Unisa, 1989), 17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. Also see Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 14.

mission. In other words, the ethos of Pentecostal faith and life is that of spiritual encounter rather than mere spiritual experience.¹⁹ There are arguably countless spiritual experiences in the world, but such experiences are not necessarily encounters with God the Holy Spirit. A perusal of Pentecostalism's place in history readily reveals the claim and reality of spiritual encounters in the lives of these Christians that contributed instrumentally towards godly living, progress in holiness and steadfastness, and empowerment for service and mission. As Robeck explains, "Pentecostals invoked the power of the Holy Spirit, manifested through signs, wonders, and charisms, to aid in personal transformation, to break down the destructive, sinful structures in individual lives, and to bring relief from misery and death."²⁰

In this light, therefore, Pentecostal perspectives and assessments of the Petrine office will be offered within the framework of spiritual experience and encounter. To what extent, for instance, is the papacy a mediator of spiritual encounter? To what degree might it be regarded as a ministry of the Spirit that influences and empowers ordinary Christian experience? Evidence in this direction is critical for any Pentecostal discourse on the Petrine ministry. For, as Frank Macchia aptly notes, Pentecostals have tended "to guard against a view of Christianity as simply a system of dogma, a liturgical practice, or an institutional reality"²¹ – unless these aspects "are involved in Christian formation."²²

3.3. PENTECOSTAL – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

That the dialogue is one between a movement of churches and a denominational body poses significant challenges and differences for the ecumenical discussion, according to Robeck and Sandidge. Firstly, regarding ecclesial heritage, "the Roman Catholic Church has a well-developed and broadly documented theological tradition

¹⁹ For this discussion, see Daniel E. Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual" in *Pneuma* 14, No. 2 (1996), 21. The necessary importance of this rhetorical distinction was especially underlined by Robeck in personal discussion in Pasadena, California (U.S.A.), January 2003.

²⁰ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "Pentecostalism" in Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, 531.

²¹ F.D. Macchia, "Theology, Pentecostal" in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1129.

²² Ibid.

from which to draw, whereas the pentecostals do not.”²³ Secondly, regarding employed methods, “Pentecostals often approach theological issues from a personal witness or pastoral dimension”²⁴ whereas Roman Catholics develop “precise theological formulations and tend to be less comfortable with testimony and the sharing of personal thoughts and feelings.”²⁵ Thirdly, regarding hermeneutical departure points, they “have not always understood each other very well when discussing biblical themes”.²⁶ And, fourthly, regarding points of emphasis, “Pentecostals generally emphasise spiritual experience, crisis moments of faith, and the power of the Holy Spirit”²⁷ whereas “Roman Catholics speak more of the role of the sacraments, the life of the church, and the Trinitarian dimension of the Holy Spirit.”²⁸

Locating a Pentecostal perspective on the Petrine ministry is, therefore, a chequered affair. In terms of the ecclesial tradition per sé, it is arguably more accurate to talk about Pentecostalism rather than Pentecostals,²⁹ which inevitably presents the current task with obvious challenges. Furthermore, Pentecostals do not share with Roman Catholics a rich and long ecclesiastical tradition from which to harbour the doctrine of the papacy. Moreover, they are not readily in the position to provide exhaustive theological formulations and arguments in response to the papal institution. This notwithstanding, given their pastoral, personal, and experiential emphases, they do challenge the integrity of the Petrine office in terms of its praxis in church and society.

3.3.1. A Brief Overview

Ecumenical discussion between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, rooted in the efforts of David J. du Plessis and other players,³⁰ and subsequent to several

²³ Robeck and Sandidge, “Dialogue, Roman Catholic and Classical Pentecostal” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 580.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ See this discussion in A.A. Anderson and W.J. Hollenweger (Eds), *Pentecostals After a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

³⁰ The most notable Pentecostal figure in the roots of Pentecostal-Roman Catholic ecumenism is David J. du Plessis, who featured significantly in the development of the new perspective with which

preliminary meetings in the early 1970s,³¹ was formally established in 1972 in quinquennium format. Each quinquennium would comprise one meeting per year, moderated by two co-chairpersons, would include both Classical and Neo-Pentecostal representatives, and would bring forth agreed accounts out of their theological discourse. Very importantly, as the Vatican report on its relations with Pentecostals makes clear, the dialogue would not focus on “the objective of structural unity, but has from the outset aimed at deepening understanding and reciprocal respect”³² between the communions. To date it has undergone four complete phases, while a fifth phase is currently in its final stage.³³

The first quinquennium, in the period 1972-1976, concentrated on the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian initiation, the Spirit and the church, and the role of the Spirit in worship and prayer.³⁴ The Pentecostal team comprised both Classical and

both Pentecostal and Roman Catholic Christians would view one another. See his account in his *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost as told to Bob Slosser* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977), especially 199-247. According to Ans J. van der Bent, “Du Plessis was for a generation the leading figure in relations between Pentecostal churches and the ecumenical movement.” For further details of his legacy, see Ans J. van der Bent, “Du Plessis, David J.” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 340. Peter Hocken also draws attention to Du Plessis’ ecumenical involvement. Quite unusual for leaders of historic Pentecostalism, Du Plessis “attended all the WCC assemblies from Evanston to Vancouver and laboured to gain official denominational support for the international Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue.” See Peter Hocken, “Pentecostals” in *Ibid.*, 901-902. In another article, Hocken highlights the visionary role of Du Plessis between the 1970s and 1987 (when he died), in more specific ways. See Peter Hocken, “Pentecostal-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in *Ibid.*, 899. For a detailed and resourceful biographical article on Du Plessis, see R.P. Spittler, “Du Plessis, David Johannes” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 589-593. See also Robeck and Sandidge, “Dialogue, Roman Catholic and Classical Pentecostal” in *Ibid.*, 576ff.

³¹ For an overview of the historical background to the Dialogue, see *Ibid.*, 576-577.

³² “Relations with Pentecostals,” *Information Service* No. 109 (2002/I-II), 65.

³³ The current round of discussions, which commenced in 1998, focusses on the theme of Christian initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. PCPCU member, Juan Usma Gómez, reports: “This theme not only deals with the principal characteristic of the Pentecostal movement and Catholic sacramental structure, but it also focusses on the very sources of faith. As a result of this first joint study of the witnesses from the early centuries of Christianity, there is a desire to come to new insights that could give a greater boost to relations between Catholics and Pentecostals.” See Juan Usma Gómez, “Catholics and Pentecostals: Challenges and Possibilities” in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002*, 46. Note also Robeck’s remarks on the nature, process, and content of the current round in his unpublished paper, “The International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: An Update on the Fifth Round of Discussions”, Public Lecture for the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (21 September 2004).

³⁴ See “Final Report: Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and Leaders of the (sic) Some Pentecostal Churches and Participants in the Charismatic Movement within Protestant and Anglican Churches, 1972-1976” in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, William G. Rusch (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 713-720. Hereafter referred to as FR 1972-1976.

Neo-Pentecostals,³⁵ with the latter presenting the majority of the papers. They sought “to give special attention to the meaning for the Church of fullness of life in the Holy Spirit”³⁶ in ways that would draw them closer together in prayer and common witness. The participants agreed that the dialogue was “an occasion of mutual enrichment and understanding and offers the promise of a continuing relationship”,³⁷ even though their study conclusions would not bear an ‘official’ seal that committed any of their churches to the expressed theological positions.

The second quinquennium, in the period 1977 and 1979-1982, grappled with such issues as faith and experience, biblical hermeneutics, speaking in tongues, healing, the church as communion in worship, scripture and tradition, Mary, and ministry.³⁸ In this case, the Pentecostal team excluded its Neo-Pentecostal colleagues in order to facilitate greater focus in the ecclesial discussions.³⁹ Given the reality of divergences between the two communions, the dialogue took special interest in seeking common theological ground as the basis for future discourse and work together. The final report did not commit either communion to any theological position, but was offered to the churches for reflection and assessment.⁴⁰

The third quinquennium, in the period 1985-1989, focussed on *koinonia* as well as baptism.⁴¹ Its aim was directed toward developing “a climate of mutual understanding in matters of faith and practice: to find points of genuine agreement

³⁵ For a brief but resourceful differentiation between Classical Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal ecclesiologies, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 76-78.

³⁶ FR 1972-1976, §5.

³⁷ Ibid., §46.

³⁸ See “Final Report: Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and Some Classical Pentecostals, 1977-1982” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 721-734. Hereafter referred to as FR 1977-1982.

³⁹ See Ibid., §6. Three other reasons are noted for this change: “First, Roman Catholics wanted specifically to engage members of the worldwide pentecostal movement. Second, a number of national or international dialogues already existed between Roman Catholics and the various non-Roman churches represented in the charismatic renewal. Third, the pentecostals wanted to involve a broader spectrum of pentecostal denominations in the Dialogue process.” See Robeck and Sandidge, “Dialogue, Roman Catholic and Classical Pentecostal” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 578.

⁴⁰ FR 1977-1982, §§94-95.

⁴¹ See “Perspectives on Koinonia: Report from the Third Quinquennium of the Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders, 1985-1989” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 735-752. Hereafter referred to as FR 1985-1989.

as well as to indicate areas in which further dialogue is required.”⁴² Quite significantly, these discussions were “noted for the growing acceptance of the dialogue by the worldwide Pentecostal community”;⁴³ previous dialogues included Pentecostal representatives devoid of any official authorisation. This series was different, therefore, in that “For the first time several Pentecostal churches authorised the participation of officially appointed representatives to the dialogue.”⁴⁴

The fourth quinquennium, in the period 1990-1997, engaged extensively with the subject of evangelisation and mission in the third millennium.⁴⁵ It was particularly concerned with “the question of proselytism as a real and ethical dilemma to be approached in the light of the call to Christian unity and of the need for common witness.”⁴⁶ The resulting report *Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness* was released in 1998 for “review, evaluation, correction and reception” among the respective churches.⁴⁷ Recognising the call to evangelise as an essential part of the church’s mission, the participants hoped “that their work together points towards possibilities of cooperation in mission for the sake of the gospel.”⁴⁸

The following section surveys the aforementioned dialogue reports for their relevancy regarding the papal office as problem and promise. It analyses these papal references, albeit few and far between, to discern how some Pentecostal leaders are talking about the Petrine ministry in each of these four dialogues, and seeks to draw conclusions concerning the state and future of this theological ‘thorn in the flesh’ for

⁴² Ibid., §5.

⁴³ Ibid., §4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. In insightful fashion, Robeck and Sandidge draw attention to the official support and representation from the Roman Catholic Church that the Dialogue has received, as opposed to the less supportive position among Pentecostals: “A few pentecostal groups have embraced this Dialogue and its work. Some others have chosen to treat it with benign neglect. Still others have worked tirelessly to put an end to it by calling for the discipline of its participants or suppressing news of its work among their constituents. These facts have taken a personal toll on many of the participants, and they have led some pentecostals and Roman Catholics who have not had the opportunity to evaluate the fruit of the Dialogue themselves to question the value of the Dialogue.” See Robeck and Sandidge, “Dialogue, Roman Catholic and Classical Pentecostal” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 580.

⁴⁵ See “Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness, 1990-1997” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 753-779. Hereafter referred to as FR 1990-1997.

⁴⁶ “Relations with Pentecostals,” *Information Service*, 65.

⁴⁷ FR 1990-1997, §4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., §8.

continuing ecumenical discourse and relations between the Pentecostal and Roman Catholic communions.

3.3.2. Final Report, 1977-1982

3.3.2.1. Concerning church membership through Petrine communion

The Report indicates the different, albeit not unlike, ways toward membership in Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches.⁴⁹ Like Pentecostals, Roman Catholics are initiated into church fellowship through profession of faith, participation in the life of the church, and submitting to leadership. However, Roman Catholics specifically include baptism and active communion with their bishops and pope as additional agencies of membership.⁵⁰ In this way their active communion with the pope forms part and parcel of their responsibility to participate in the life of the church and to follow the leadership. On this point Pentecostals diverge from the Roman Catholic Church's high regard for structural bonds among the churches, especially as understood in relation to the Bishop of Rome.⁵¹ This notwithstanding, Roman Catholicism affirms Pentecostals and other churches as fellow brothers and sisters in a real though incomplete communion.⁵²

3.3.2.2. Concerning Pope Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus* on Marian reform

The Report refers to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary as a serious point of divergence for the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue, on which Pentecostals take great issue with the doctrinal development of this belief.⁵³ Notwithstanding this theological divergence, which is usually accompanied by the practice of Marian veneration, the Roman Catholics draw attention to the earnest concern of the papal office vis-à-vis the occurrence of certain excesses in this practice.⁵⁴ They point to the norms of Vatican II, as well as the Bishop of Rome's commitment in taking practical

⁴⁹ Cf. FR 1977-1982, §§41-48.

⁵⁰ Ibid., §43.

⁵¹ Cf. Ibid., §48.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., §§58ff. See especially §72, which refers to the Roman Catholic Church's biblical enumeration of Mary that formed a basis for the development of the doctrine of immaculate conception, which was ultimately defined in explicit fashion by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

⁵⁴ Ibid., §65. See Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus* (1974), §§24-36.

steps to correct excesses where they occur. While the issue of Marian theology is extremely problematic and contentious for Pentecostals, the picture of a pope committed to devotional integrity in matters Marian is clearly evident.⁵⁵

3.3.3. Perspectives on Koinonia, 1985-1989

3.3.3.1. Concerning the Bishop of Rome and church order

The Report notes that, for Roman Catholics, “koinonia is rooted in the bonds of faith and sacramental life shared by congregations united in dioceses pastored by bishops.”⁵⁶ As these bishops maintain communion among the local churches, “the bishop of Rome is recognised as the successor of Peter and presides over the whole Catholic communion.”⁵⁷ They hold that such existing ecclesiastical structures are “God-given” and form part of the very essence of church order, not merely serving its well-being.⁵⁸

Pentecostals are open to the ecclesial status of other churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, and seek to guard against a narrow understanding of church order, even one that is not experientially shared by Pentecostal churches. They are cautious about an unchecked episcopal order through which the pope exercises his office, preferring rather presbyterial and/or congregational ecclesial models, which they believe offer a better expression of the mutuality or reciprocity demanded by koinonia. The Pentecostals are open to the reality that the Spirit may work through ecclesial structures and processes, which could possibly include that of the Roman Catholic papal institution.⁵⁹

3.3.4. Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness, 1990-1997

3.3.4.1. Concerning the role of papal encyclicals in official teaching

⁵⁵ The high Marian commitment of Pope John Paul II is textually evident in all his official writings, where the pope in the closing remarks in these documents gives reference to Mary.

⁵⁶ FR 1985-1989, §82.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., §83.

⁵⁹ Ibid., §88.

The participants are cognisant that in their coming together as “peers”⁶⁰ they have different ways of finding theological agreement or consensus. Papal encyclicals and conciliar documents of Vatican II are underlined for their teaching import within Roman Catholicism. Pentecostals do not share such a resource, given their great diversity, but rather find a common consensus through their gathering together to focus on a particular matter and discerning the common consensus held by the vast majority within global Pentecostalism.⁶¹

3.3.4.2. Concerning Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II on evangelisation

The Report indicates the central place that mission occupies within Roman Catholicism, which is readily discernible in Vatican II documents as well as the resourceful teaching of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II.⁶² These popes frequently attest to the church’s commitment to common witness which, the Report notes, “shows the bonds of communion (koinonia) between divided churches.”⁶³ Common witness is possible on the grounds that a real albeit imperfect communion exists between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics at this stage of their ecumenical sojourn.⁶⁴

3.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PENTECOSTAL – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

Speaking on the Roman Catholic Church’s new relations with other ecclesial communities - of which Pentecostalism features pre-eminently - Walter Kasper draws attention to their importance and openness to ecumenical dialogue in contradistinction to “the older and newer sects and ... the many new ‘mushroom

⁶⁰ FR 1990-1997, §3.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., §12.

⁶³ Ibid., §121.

⁶⁴ Ibid. They elaborate: “As members of the dialogue we believe that a limited common witness is already possible because in many ways a vital spiritual unity exists between us, a real though imperfect communion (Perspectives on Koinonia, 54-55). We already have communion in the grace of Jesus Christ.”

churches' in Latin America, Africa and Asia"⁶⁵ that, owing to "their fundamentalist, often very aggressive, proselytising and syncretistic attitudes and practices",⁶⁶ cannot be embraced as partners on the ecumenical sojourn. He asserts, in no uncertain terms, that the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements "present a real challenge, enabling us to stand together and give common witness to Christian brotherhood despite all the differences and problems that still exist."⁶⁷ Kasper's remarks reveal a veritable paradigm shift within Roman Catholicism regarding the legitimacy of Pentecostalism as a movement of the Holy Spirit,⁶⁸ and underline the resourcefulness and complementarity of this tradition for the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian communions.

Some critical and integrative remarks are now offered regarding the problem and promise of the Petrine ministry in respect of the Pentecostal tradition, with special consideration given to those signs of stuckness that would, as well as those signs of hope that could, form the basis for concretely advancing the theological and ecumenical journey among Pentecostals and Roman Catholics in the immediate future.

3.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

In no small measure, the Pentecostal tradition generally has little or no regard for the papacy; for this reason, the topic is hardly mentioned in the aforementioned ecumenical reports. This notwithstanding, the analysis of the Pentecostal-Roman Catholic texts reveals that Pentecostals continue to struggle with several aspects of the doctrine and praxis of the Petrine office. These include the structural necessity of the bishops and pope for establishing ecclesiality and communion; the existence and maintenance by the pope of such theologically contentious issues as Marian piety; and other general doctrinal and methodological divergences.

⁶⁵ Cardinal Walter Kasper, "Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement", *Information Service*, 13-14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ See, for example, Pope John Paul II's statement in 1999, that "it is necessary to distinguish clearly between Christian communities [including Pentecostals], with which ecumenical relations can be established, and sects, cults and other pseudo-religious movements." John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1999), §49.

The underlying stuckness characterising Pentecostal-Roman Catholic discourse on the Petrine ministry is ecclesiological in nature. Given the closeness of Pentecostalism to Evangelicalism, Pentecostals' repudiation of the papal institution coincides with the overarching problems experienced by the broader Evangelical family: an ecclesiology that is too theologically sophisticated, ecclesiastically strict, institutionally sacramentalistic, and questionable regarding its Scripture-in-Tradition philosophy. At the same time, given the distinctiveness of Pentecostalism as a Christian tradition among numerous other traditions, several additional problematic ecclesiological facets are discernible from the vantage point of Pentecostals concerning the Roman Catholic framework of the church and its incorporation and substantiation of the Petrine office.

3.4.1.1. *The problem of a meticulous ecclesiology*

Pentecostal ecclesiology differs from Roman Catholic ecclesiology, first and foremost, as regards to its level of sophistication and place in theological loci. Put simply by Peter Hocken, "The concept of the church has not generally been central to pentecostal faith".⁶⁹ While first-generation Pentecostals show evidence of initial presuppositions on ecclesiology,⁷⁰ it is only very recently that some attention is being given to the doctrine of the church.⁷¹

⁶⁹ P.D. Hocken, "Pentecostal Theology of the Church" in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 544. In fact, according to Roman Catholic Paul D. Lee, the fact that Pentecostalism is regarded as a movement places a question mark around the thought of a distinctive Pentecostal ecclesiology: "is it useful or valid to talk about ecclesiology at all? What does ecclesiology mean to a Pentecostal? At first, Pentecostals were so busy spreading the 'good news' of the fresh outpouring of the Spirit 'in the last days' that they became unconcerned about forming a denomination. The premillennial urgency of the imminent Kingdom made Pentecostals focus on their readiness, through personal conversion and regeneration, thereby rendering any ecclesiological deliberation rather irrelevant or at least secondary." See Paul D. Lee, *Pneumatological Ecclesiology in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: A Catholic Reading of the Third Quinquennium* (1985-1989) (Dissertatio Ad Lauream in Facultate S. Theologiae Apud Pontificiam Universitatem S. Thomae in Urbe, Rome, 1994), 15.

⁷⁰ Cf. P.D. Hocken, "Pentecostal Theology of the Church" in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 545.

⁷¹ Ibid., 545-546, where Hocken highlights four key factors promoting attention to the church in recent times: 1) concern for the unity of the movement, 2) the denominationalisation of the movement, 3) church growth theory, and 4) the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue.

Concerning the prevailing “common threads of theological concern among pentecostals”,⁷² Frank Macchia directs the theological spotlight on Christology as the centre of Pentecostal theology. Beyond the “themes of salvation, Spirit baptism, healing, and eschatology that made up the ‘full Gospel’”⁷³ in Pentecostalism, was the distinctive aspect of “how these themes formed a ‘gestalt’ of devotion in the Spirit to Jesus that ... gave Pentecostalism its christological centre as well as its theological cogency and direction.”⁷⁴

Hocken is thus correct in drawing attention to the fact that, for Pentecostals, “their forté has been action rather than reflective theology, in part, perhaps, through a Protestant fear that focus on the church diminishes the focus on Christ.”⁷⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, in complementary fashion, notes that their accent is “on lived Charismatic spirituality rather than on discursive theology.”⁷⁶ The implication for Pentecostal ecclesiological perspectives on the Petrine office, a structure embedded deeply in the meticulous and complex theological framework of Roman Catholicism, is thus not difficult to draw out: The ecclesiological weight of Roman Catholics, when compared to that of Pentecostalism, poses a serious hurdle to ecumenical engagement on the office of the pope.

3.4.1.2. *The problem of a materialistic ecclesiology*

The Roman Catholic ecclesiological insistence on Petrine communion for ecclesiality, church membership, koinonia, and God-given unity is indisputably problematic for Pentecostalism. The employed criteria of the Bishop of Rome and his fellow-bishops, as well as certain other means such as water baptism and the Eucharist, feature pre-eminently in Roman Catholic ecclesiology and ecumenical conditions.

⁷² F.D. Macchia, “Theology, Pentecostal” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1120.

⁷³ Ibid., 1123.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1123-1124.

⁷⁵ Hocken, “Pentecostal Theology of the Church” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 550.

⁷⁶ Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 72.

The third round of the Dialogue underlined the Roman Catholic understanding of *koinonia* as “rooted in the bonds of faith and sacramental life shared by congregations united in dioceses pastured by bishops.”⁷⁷ The participants underlined the agency of bishops through whom “the local churches are in communion with one another by reason of the common faith, the common sacramental life, and the common episcopacy.”⁷⁸ More specifically, within “the fellowship of bishops, the bishop of Rome is recognised as the successor of Peter and presides over the whole Catholic communion.”⁷⁹

Pentecostals are neither *au fait* nor concordant with what they repudiate to be a highly materialistic and structural ecclesiological basis for church identity, order and communion. This, no doubt, has frustrated Pentecostal engagement with Roman Catholics and their “exclusivist ecclesiology”.⁸⁰ In a broader sense, Pentecostals have not been comfortable with a visible material understanding of the church, but have maintained instead a conception of the church merely as an invisible spiritual reality.⁸¹ For, as Robeck makes clear, “Pentecostalism is highly critical of institutionalisation in the church. The church is viewed as transportable, adaptable, indigenisable, and personal. It requires no hierarchy”.⁸²

This notwithstanding, Pentecostal ecclesiology includes similar exclusivist tendencies. Among their fundamental thrusts, according to Hocken, is one that “sees the spiritual gifts as an intrinsic element in the life and equipment of the local church.”⁸³ Some “see these charismatic endowments of the Holy Spirit not just as evangelistic equipment but as forming and shaping the church.”⁸⁴ For this reason, “a pentecostal view of the church expects the full range of the spiritual gifts to be

⁷⁷ FR 1985-1989, §82.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ See Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue: Some Pentecostal Assumptions” in *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, Vol. XXI (2001), 6.

⁸¹ The foremost Pentecostal scholar who has consistently argued for a more integrated and symbiotic understanding of the church’s visibility or materiality and invisibility or ‘spiritual-ity’ in the Pentecostal tradition is Robeck. In this regard, he has given considerable attention to the ecumenical nuances concerning visible unity within Pentecostalism’s earliest origins.

⁸² Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Pentecostalism” in Adrian Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 531.

⁸³ Hocken, “Pentecostal Theology of the Church” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 547.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

manifested in each local assembly”⁸⁵ as “normative in contemporary church life and ministry.”⁸⁶ The strict bonds of communion in Roman Catholicism in contradistinction to those in Pentecostalism poses a notable ecclesiological hurdle in principle vis-à-vis ecumenical engagement in general and convergence on the Petrine office specifically.

3.4.1.3. The problem of a mediated ecclesiology

Another critical difference characterising Roman Catholic ecclesiology rests with the high mediational role attributed to its ordained ministers – priests, bishops, *a fortiori* the Bishop of Rome – in carrying out the manifold responsibilities of the church. According to church doctrine, and framed within a hierarchical ecclesiological framework, the Roman Catholic ordained serve a sacramental role as primary mediators in continuing the grace of ministry within the church.⁸⁷

In direct contrast, Pentecostalism prides itself on its strong emphasis and commitment to the role of all believers in the affairs of the church and its ministry. Pentecostal ecclesiology does not theologically maintain the dichotomy between clergy and laity that is so self-evident in Roman Catholic thought and life. Macchia aptly talks about the “gifted congregation” as a notable hallmark of Pentecostalism, and sheds light on the all-important ways in which the spiritual gifts empower the laity as genuine ministers of the gospel.⁸⁸

Pentecostals view with disdain the reality of offices that invest individual believers with a different kind of power and status to the ordinary believer; for Pentecostals, all believers are actually or potentially endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit for ministry and witness. In this regard, therefore, the distinctive structure of the papal office is a serious ecclesiological offence in Pentecostal perspective. They do not view

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 14.

⁸⁷ For examples, see *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (21 November 1964) in Austin Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II*, Vol. 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Northport: Costello, 1996), (full text 350-426), especially §§18-29 passim.

⁸⁸ For this discussion, see Macchia, “Theology, Pentecostal” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1137-1138.

the papacy as “God-given” and as part of the very essence of the church, not even for the church’s well-being.

3.4.2. Signs of Hope

The analysis of the dialogue texts reveals that Pentecostals are not saying much nor much new about the Petrine office per sé. They harbour serious theological reservations about the papal institution itself and related issues. At the same time, the texts reflect a few subtle affirmations vis-à-vis the office and work of the pope. The participants refer to the pope as one who is concerned about the credibility of church practices, such as Marian veneration, and who takes practical steps in correcting unsound aspects associated with these practices; that the exercise of his office demands accountability concerning koinonia mutuality or reciprocity; that his papal documents are valuable teaching resources within Roman Catholicism, at least; and that mission has rightfully occupied a central place in the teaching and practices of recent popes as attesting to their commitment to common witness.

While few and subtle, these remarks arguably serve as strategic points of ecumenical entry, in indirect and implicit ways, to potential dialogue on the Petrine office for Pentecostal church leaders and their ecumenical theologians. The following areas for possible *entrée* and engagement by Pentecostals are identified and noted for their prospective import.

3.4.2.1. On the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit

In the first round of discussions the participants draw attention to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the church, described as “sovereignly free, distributing his gifts to whomsoever he wills, whenever and howsoever he wills”⁸⁹ and who “never ceased manifesting himself throughout the entire history of the church”.⁹⁰ This fact would require further treatment and exploration vis-à-vis the papacy, since it could open up the possibility for Pentecostals that the Spirit is not necessarily absent or distant from the papal structure in the light of the Spirit’s sovereignty and omnipresence in

⁸⁹ FR 1972-1976, §13.

⁹⁰ Ibid., §16.

human history and Christian ministry, and where the charisma related to the Petrine ministry could even be thought of as “sovereign manifestations of the Holy Spirit”⁹¹ that in principle functions ministerially as “a demonstration of the power of the Spirit.”⁹²

Affirming the sovereignty of the Spirit confronts Pentecostals to guard against a narrow view of the church at large. Just as they question the strict criteria for ecclesiality as held by Roman Catholics so, too, Pentecostals may be questioned about the strict bonds of communion they hold with respect to the normative expectation of the spiritual gifts.⁹³ In the light of the Spirit’s sovereignty, the Holy Spirit may in reality be working in Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches and structures in different, yet not incompatible, ways.

Pentecostals may well be rebuked for failing to reflect an expectancy concerning the Spirit’s presence and proprium within the papal institution, which they would otherwise reflect when viewing their own institutions of ministry. In this regard, the participants contend for a broader expectancy as “a requisite for the manifestations of the Spirit..., that is, an openness which ... respects the sovereignty of the Spirit in the distribution of his gifts.”⁹⁴

They point out, moreover, that the charismata are gratuitously furnished by the Holy Spirit for the common good, and that the “true exercise of the charisma takes place in love and leads to a greater fidelity to Christ and his church.”⁹⁵ “In varying degrees,” they continue, “all the charisma are ministries directed to the building up of the community and witness in mission.”⁹⁶ To the extent that Pentecostals can discern the fruit of love, fidelity, edification, and missionary witness through the Petrine ministry, the case for exploring this office as a potentially authentic and propitious ministry of the Spirit would be strengthened.

⁹¹ Ibid., §18.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cf. Hocken, “Pentecostal Theology of the Church” in Burgess and Van der Maas (Eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 547.

⁹⁴ FR 1972-1976, §40.

⁹⁵ Ibid., §§15 and 17.

⁹⁶ Ibid., §17.

3.4.2.2. On the mutual recognition of ministry

In the last meeting of the second round of discussions, the subject of ministry is addressed, especially concerning “how ministry in the church continues the ministry of the apostles.”⁹⁷ Beyond the divergent viewpoints between the two communions generally as to the apostolic ministry,⁹⁸ the participants concede “that order and structure are necessary to the exercise of ministry.”⁹⁹ While there is no single blueprint for ministry structuring in the New Testament, and whereas Pentecostals do not presently subscribe to the same form as Roman Catholics,¹⁰⁰ the participants record the Pentecostal recognition of these ministries “existing and important to the life of the church.”¹⁰¹ It is the desire of Pentecostals to seek guidelines for ministry and office in the New Testament¹⁰² despite there being no uniform pattern, given that Pentecostals find it necessary to return to the Scriptures especially when problems and abuses in ministry abound.

As one case in point, the participants draw attention to “a problem of over-institutionalisation of ministry”¹⁰³ which Pentecostals seemingly locate in the history and practice of Roman Catholicism, *a fortiori* within the Petrine office. In Pentecostalism it is “the current dynamic of the Spirit [that] is regarded as a more valid endorsement of apostolic faith and ministry than an unbroken line of episcopal succession.”¹⁰⁴ This Pentecostal critique of the outworking of ministry is an apt and necessary gesture of accountability and correction levelled at Roman Catholics and the papacy. It serves to remind the church of the danger of compromising the spiritual nature of ministry. The Petrine ministry may be of an institutional

⁹⁷ FR 1977-1982, §77.

⁹⁸ Ibid., §79. To note one critical difference: “For Roman Catholics, the succession of bishops in an orderly transmission of ministry through history is both guarantee and manifestation of this fidelity. For Pentecostals, the current dynamic of the Spirit is regarded as a more valid endorsement of apostolic faith and ministry than an unbroken line of episcopal succession. They look to apostolic life and to the power of preaching which leads to conversions to Jesus Christ as an authentication of apostolic ministry” (§§89-90).

⁹⁹ Ibid., §80.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. §82: “Roman Catholics see evidence of ministerial office in the New Testament and find in such office part of God’s design for the early church, but find in the gradual emergence of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon the way in which God’s design is fulfilled and structural and ministerial needs are met in the church.”

¹⁰¹ Ibid., §83.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., §84.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., §90.

character, but it must consistently be kept mindful and accountable in terms of its mandate as a 'charismatic' ministry of the Spirit.¹⁰⁵ For Pentecostals, the authentication of apostolic ministry resides primarily in "apostolic life and [in] ... the power of preaching which leads to conversions to Jesus Christ".¹⁰⁶

At the conclusion of their meeting the participants unanimously affirmed the desire to proceed with the ecumenical sojourn together in their quest for mutual respect, acceptance, understanding, and growth in the Spirit. They declared: "Each partner to the dialogue recognises that God is at work through the ministry of the other, and recognises that the body of Christ is being built up through it."¹⁰⁷ To the extent that Pentecostals become more open to the sovereignty of the Spirit in the variegated structures of order within the churches toward ministry and witness, while also seeking to guard the spiritual integrity of these forms of ministry, the case for forging a dialogue on the Petrine ministry with Pentecostal participation could be more within ecumenical reach.

3.4.2.3. On the renewal of the church's offices and structures

In the third round of discussions the participants concede that both communions "are troubled by the discrepancy between the theology and the practice of their own parishes or congregations"¹⁰⁸ and, therefore, commit themselves to the ongoing renewal of their churches, its offices and structures. They concur that "the offices and structures of the church, as indeed every aspect of the church, are in a continual need of renewal insofar as they are institutions of men and women here on earth"¹⁰⁹ since "continuity in history by itself" – apropos of the institution of the Petrine office, for instance – "is no guarantee of spiritual maturity or of doctrinal soundness."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ However, it should be noted: "Roman Catholics place emphasis on the need for the institution of ecclesial offices as part of the divine plan for the church. They also see such institutions and ministries as related to and aiding the priesthood and ministry of all within the one body. At the same time they are aware of the dangers of institutionalism. In recent decades, there has been a renewed concern in the Roman Catholic Church for the development of the ministry of all believers" (§85).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., §90.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., §92.

¹⁰⁸ FR 1985-1989, §89.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., §106.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., §107.

At the same time, they hold “that the Spirit can breathe new life into the church’s offices and structures when these become “dry bones” (Ez 37).”¹¹¹ In this way, another avenue could be explored for its potential to engage Pentecostals in a dialogue on the papal office, given that they could contribute in the area of renewal in the light of their familiarity as Pentecostals with renewal-of-the-Spirit matters in life and church. At the same time, these remarks on renewal would challenge Pentecostals to also assess the credibility of their own respective offices and institutions. This notwithstanding, the Pentecostal dilemma lies with the call to dialogue on the renewal of a structure that they themselves categorically repudiate as an illegitimate form of ministry. Still, others might exploit the opportunity to consider how best to ‘redeem’ the papal office in order that it become more ‘Pentecostal’ in nature and orientation, whatever that might entail.

3.4.2.4. *On the common witness of believers*

In the fourth round of discussions, the participants recognise that already a good measure of common ground exists between both traditions, rightly affirming that “a vital spiritual unity exists between us, a real though imperfect communion.”¹¹² They underline the merits of common witness, which attests to “the bonds of communion (*koinonia*) between divided churches.”¹¹³ They define common witness as follows: it means “standing together and sharing together in witness to our common faith. ... [It] can be experienced through joint participation in worship, in prayer, in the performance of good works in Jesus’ name and especially in evangelisation.”¹¹⁴ Furthermore, “True common witness is ... concerned solely for the glory of God, for the good of the whole church and the good of humankind.”¹¹⁵

Notwithstanding the complex issues that still make it difficult for Pentecostals and Roman Catholics to cooperate in a relationship of trust, they recognise the demand for common witness through their enquiry: “Why do we do apart what we can do

¹¹¹ Ibid., §106.

¹¹² FR 1990-1997, §121.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., §§118-119.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

together?”¹¹⁶ They are discovering that it is an issue of great concern to the Bishop of Rome.¹¹⁷ To the extent that Pentecostals explore further the work of the pope as a missiologically-oriented role, the possibility may emerge for a potential dialogue on the promise or problem of the Petrine office as a ministry contributing to the cause of the gospel.

3.4.3. Concluding Remarks

The papacy is extremely troubling for Pentecostals. As part of the evangelical tradition position at the far end of the ecumenical spectrum, as well as their distinctive ecclesiological assumptions and framework, they would not be expected to participate in the new dialogue on the Petrine office. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of the Spirit, the case for Pentecostal participation and reception could possibly be advanced.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., §129.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

METHODIST CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE GOOD

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2003, Methodists celebrated the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of their founder, John Wesley. Attending a special Methodist church service in Rome, PCPCU president Cardinal Walter Kasper brought greetings from Pope John Paul II, and then preached on Wesley. While raising obvious concern about Wesley's "rather ungracious view of the papacy"¹ as it appeared in his commentary on the Book of Revelation, Kasper conceded to the similarly unhelpful ways in which the Roman Catholic Church had responded to Wesley.² He underlined, instead, Wesley's "Letter to a Roman Catholic" that featured as a plea for Christian understanding and tolerance and which shared similarities with the manner in which Methodists and Roman Catholics have engaged in dialogue over the last forty years.³ Eventually, Kasper noted of Wesley: "We can look to see and find in him the evangelical zeal, the

¹ See "The Church in the World" in *The Tablet* (5 July 2003), 28.

² For example, David Butler refers to the remarks by a leading eighteenth-century Roman Catholic in England, Richard Challoner, who anonymously penned his 48-page *Caveat Against the Methodists*, in which he claimed: "Methodists are not the People of God. They are not true Gospel Christians; nor is their new-raised society the true Church of Christ or any part of it. The Methodist Teachers are not the true Ministers of Christ nor are they called or sent by him. The Methodist Rule of Faith is not the Rule of true Christianity. The Methodists' pretended assurance of their own justification and their eternal salvation is no true Christian Faith but a mere illusion and groundless presumption." See David Butler, *Methodists and Papists* (DLT, 1995), 70ff.

³ In Wesley's *Letter to a Roman Catholic* on 18 July 1749, he called for an end to mutual bitterness and barbarities. Moreover, he asserted that both Roman Catholics and Protestants "were created by the same God and redeemed by his Son. Even more, they shared to a large degree a common faith and a common ethic." See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 37-38. Others, however, question the legitimacy of this irenic view of Wesley apropos of Roman Catholicism; cf. J. Robert Nelson, "Methodism and the Papacy" in Peter J. McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 161-162; John Munsey Turner, "Methodism, Roman Catholicism and the Middle Ages: A Contextual Approach" in *One in Christ*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (October 2003), 47-70 passim. Turner's article is quite resourceful in identifying an array of positions asserting that Wesley's attitude was anything but irenic or accommodating to Roman Catholicism. A third interpretative angle could possibly be advanced, that Wesley's position differentiated between institutional Roman Catholicism, on the one hand, and individual relations with Roman Catholics, on the other hand.

pursuit of holiness, the concern for the poor, the virtues and goodness which we have come to know and respect in you.”⁴

As the first positive assessment by the Vatican of Wesley’s life and work, according to PCPCU member Don Boulen,⁵ Kasper’s sermon is another of many existing signs that “organic unity is on the horizon”⁶ in Roman Catholic-Methodist ecumenical relations, as noted by Methodist ecumenist Geoffrey Wainwright. Comparatively speaking, their talks have not quite earned the same headlines in the ecumenical press as that of the Anglicans or Lutherans, for instance,⁷ yet substantial areas of convergence prevail despite ongoing differences, which have reinforced the ecumenical value of the discourse for both Roman Catholics and Methodists.

This chapter investigates the ways in which the papal office is treated within the advancing ecumenical relationship between Roman Catholics and Methodists. Wesley and his followers regarded the papacy with great disdain as, *inter alia*, the “Beast” spoken of in Revelation 13.⁸ While much rough terrain has been covered and progressively smoothed over as far as relations between Roman Catholics and Methodists (and their respective churches) are concerned, there is still a great distance to travel in order to change Methodist perspectives on the Petrine office. As Wainwright rightly notes, “Methodist tongues and ears are not familiar with ...[such language as] a ‘universal power of jurisdiction’ and of an ‘infallibility in defining doctrine’”⁹ concerning “the primacy of the Roman pontiffs as successors of the

⁴ See “The Church in the World”, *The Tablet*, 28. For some remarks on Wesley’s priority to human need, see Francis Frost, “Methodism” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 754.

⁵ Cf. “The Church in the World”, *The Tablet*, 28.

⁶ Cited by Geoffrey Wainwright, in “Catholic-Methodist dialogue co-chairs say unity will happen someday” in *Catholic News Service* (CNS News Briefs, 12 March 2004), at www.catholicnews.com/briefs.htm. Accessed 08/08/2004.

⁷ Cf. George H. Tavard, “The Dialogue Between Methodists and Catholics” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 2 (1994), 176.

⁸ For an example of Wesley’s detailed exegetical analysis vis-à-vis the papacy, see “Revelation 13: John Wesley’s Explanatory Notes” at www.christnotes.org/bible.asp?ViewBible=Revelation+13. Accessed 08/08/2004.

⁹ Geoffrey Wainwright, “‘The Gift Which He on One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove’: A Possible Methodist Approach to a Ministry of Primacy in the Circulation of Love and Truth” in James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: “Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue”. A Symposium Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 62, also 60-61.

apostle Peter in a ministry of pastor and teacher instituted by Christ the Lord for the sake of the unity and faithfulness of the entire Church.”¹⁰

4.2. THE NATURE OF METHODIST CHRISTIANITY

The worldwide Methodist movement, with its roots in the work of brothers John and Charles Wesley, “began in the eighteenth century as a movement of evangelistic, moral, sacramental and social revival within the Church of England.”¹¹ The hallmark of Methodism came to include its “weekly prayer meetings; the use of an itinerary system of travelling preachers; the annual conferences; the establishment of chapels; the prolific outpouring of tracts, letters, sermons, and hymns; and the general superintendency of John Wesley”.¹²

On the core of Methodist thought, however, Wesley simply stated in his *Thoughts upon Methodism*: “The essence of it is holiness of heart and life.”¹³ In a letter to a friend, he elaborated: “We set out upon two principles: (1) None go to heaven without holiness of heart and life; (2) whosoever follows after this (whatever his opinions be) is my ‘brother and sister and mother.’ And we have not swerved an hair’s breadth from either one or the other of these to this day.”¹⁴ In this regard, Stephen A. Seamands asserts:

Wesley and the early Methodists had a clear sense of identity and mission. They believed God had raised up the movement to promote holiness in every sphere of life – in the individual, the church, society, and the world. Holiness was Methodism’s driving force and burning focus, the hub that held all the spokes of the wheel of the movement together. Indeed, all the major emphases of Wesley’s theology and practice – prevenient grace, evangelism and the new birth, the means of grace, personal ethics, societies and class meetings, social justice, and Christian perfection – all flowed from his passion for holiness.¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid., 62.

¹¹ Geoffrey Wainwright, “Methodism” in Alister E. McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 373.

¹² P.A. Mickey, “Methodism” in Walter A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 768.

¹³ Cited in Stephen A. Seamands, “‘Submitting to Be More Vile’: The Quest for Holiness and Its Cost” in Paul W. Chilcote (Ed.), *The Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 123.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 124.

This theological imperative of holiness is a primary component of Methodist Christianity (albeit not unique within and to Methodism),¹⁶ which *inter alia* sees “sanctification not so much as an individual process with social consequences but rather as a corporate process in which Christians are integrated into an ecclesial community that bears witness to, and perhaps even seeks to transform, the human world in which it is set.”¹⁷ An assessment of Methodist perspectives on the Petrine office will, therefore, necessarily be required to ascertain to what extent the orientation and work of the papal office coincides with and supports the Methodist axiological base of social holiness for the common good.

4.3. METHODIST – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

Notwithstanding the inevitable differences and obstacles between the two communions, there are at least three inherent factors concerning Methodism that encourage ecumenical dialogue in general and the papal dialogue in particular. In the first place, there is the ecumenical orientation of Methodism,¹⁸ which readily provides a viable avenue for dialogue and cooperation. In the second place, there is the less-complex nature of their historical relationship as Roman Catholics and

¹⁶ While the desire and quest for holiness is not unique to Methodism, it certainly features as a prominent emphasis in Methodist origins. For example, see Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 53ff and 84ff; Seamands, “Submitting to Be More Vile” in Chilcote (Ed.), *The Wesleyan Tradition*, 123-135; Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), passim. The last-mentioned book provides resourceful historical material on the origins and development of the Methodist movement vis-à-vis John Wesley and his particular theological or ecclesial agenda.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Wainwright, “Methodist Thought” in Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, 429. Examples of Methodist ethicists in this regard, include the following: Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics* (1950); *Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics* (1967); Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (1975); *A Community of Character* (1981); *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1983); James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970); *God of the Oppressed* (1975); M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist* (1989); L. Gregory Jones, *Transformed Judgement: Toward a Trinitarian Account of the Moral Life* (1990); *Embodying Forgiveness* (1995); José Míguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (1975); *Toward a Christian Political Ethics* (1983); George Eli, *Social Holiness* (1994).

¹⁸ For some remarks on this ecumenical orientation, including references to Methodism’s inter- and intra-church conversations, see Francis Frost, “Methodism” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 753-756. Frederick Bliss notes: “For a long time, the Methodist Church has been strongly and enthusiastically ecumenical, as is evidenced by the work of men such as G. Bromley Oxnam and John R. Mott, who were instrumental in setting up the World Council of Churches in 1948. This spirit, no doubt, accounts for the healings that have taken place within Methodism itself”. See Frederick M. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church is Ecumenical and What She Is Doing About It* (Franklin: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 164.

Methodists,¹⁹ which has allowed both communions to proceed in more focussed and constructive fashion in their ecumenical discourse without the overwhelming theological 'baggage' of the past that characterises and slows down the dialogues between Roman Catholicism and other churches. And, in the third place, there is their mutual concern for holiness in Christian faith and life,²⁰ which has aided both communions to move forward on the basis of important common ground.

4.3.1. A Brief Overview

Formal ecumenical conversations between Roman Catholics and Methodists commenced with the establishment of the Joint Commission in 1967 of the World Methodist Council (WMC) and the Vatican's SPCU. These bilateral discussions throughout the past forty years are characterised by undeniable progress, improved understanding, and increased recognition on a variety of theological and ministerial fronts.²¹ According to David Carter, a high level of ecclesial integrity marks these

¹⁹ The Methodist church grew out of a separation from the Church of England in the late eighteenth century, a point that is highlighted in various materials. In the Denver Report, for instance, they assert that their ecumenical conversation has "a singular advantage: there is no history of formal separating between the two Churches, none of the historical, emotional problems consequent on a history of schism" (§6). See "Denver Report" in Harding Meyer and Luke Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, Faith and Order Paper No. 108 (Geneva: WCC, 1984), 308-339. In this regard, and reflecting on the progress experienced through the various dialogues between Roman Catholics and Methodists, Wainwright draws attention to "to the fact that while they find themselves apart, they have never known the bitterness of a direct schism." See Geoffrey Wainwright, "Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue" in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 759-760. J. Robert Nelson concurs, though concedes: "Methodist attitudes toward the Catholic Church are neither informed by ancestral memories of disruption and controversy nor inspired by bright hopes of reconciliation", with the latter accounting, perhaps, for the low ecumenical profile of Roman Catholic-Methodist conversations. See J. Robert Nelson, "Methodism and the Papacy" in McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians?*, 161. Wainwright, in an informal sense, likens this reality to that of the relationship "between a grandmother and her grandchildren than between a child and its parents (as would be the case between Anglicans and Rome, or between Methodists and Canterbury)." See Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 39-40.

²⁰ See David Carter, "Can the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches be Reconciled?" in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January 2002), 1. Also, Pope John Paul II noted this common heritage in his address to the World Methodist Council delegation in 1992: "Concern for holiness has been a significant part of the spiritual tradition of both Catholics and Methodists. Authentic Christian holiness will always remain first and foremost a gift of God ... We may be confident that the effort to live in fidelity to this gift will involve its own ecumenical dynamism, for as the Second Vatican Council observed, the more Christians strive to live holier lives according to the Gospel, 'the better they will be able to further the unity of Christians' (UR 7)." See Pope John Paul II, "Holiness: an important factor in ecumenism" in *L'Osservatore Romano* (April 1, 1992), 3. The holiness motif is, furthermore, discernible in each of the formal dialogue texts.

²¹ For a helpful survey of the first five dialogues, see Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 39-56. See also David Carter, "The Roman Catholic-Methodist Dialogue" in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (April 1999), 7-15.

discourses, where “Great honesty was displayed in recording areas of continuing disagreement as well as those of agreement or convergence”.²²

In their series of seven rounds of five-year dialogues, they have issued reports to the quinquennial assemblies of the WMC, which are addressed simultaneously to the Vatican.²³ The first quinquennium, in the period 1967-1970, resulted in the “Denver Report”,²⁴ which broadly explored such themes as Christianity and the contemporary world, spirituality, Christian home and family, Eucharist, ministry, and authority. The second quinquennium, in the period 1972-1975, resulted in the “Dublin Report”,²⁵ which built on and extended the discussion of the first consultation, addressing also such topics as mission, evangelism, church union negotiations, and moral-social concerns.

The third quinquennium, in the period 1977-1981, resulted in the “Honolulu Report”,²⁶ through which they established an agreed statement on the Holy Spirit. The issue of authority – especially papal authority – and its relationship to the Spirit was addressed, as well as other such topics as Christian experience, moral decisions, and Christian marriage. Whereas in the first set of dialogues the issues addressed were of a more general and broad nature, Wainwright notes that ecclesiology comes to the forefront of discussions afterwards, particularly in the fourth and fifth rounds of the dialogue.²⁷

The fourth quinquennium, in the period 1982-1985, resulted in the “Nairobi Report”,²⁸ which addressed the nature of the Church as *koinonia*, reflecting the call

²² Carter, “Can the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches be Reconciled?”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

²³ Wainwright explains the chronological logic: “The joint commission ... has arranged its work in five-year periods so that its successive reports could be presented to its Methodist principals at the quinquennial gatherings of the WMC.” See Wainwright, “Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 758.

²⁴ See “Denver Report, 1971” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 308-339. Hereafter referred to as FR 1971.

²⁵ See “Dublin Report, 1976” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 340-366. Hereafter referred to as FR 1976.

²⁶ See “Honolulu Report, 1981” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 367-387. Hereafter referred to as FR 1981.

²⁷ Wainwright states that ecclesiology became a primary concern in other bilateral dialogues in the 1980s and also on the multilateral scene. He explains that churches at this time were looking at and wrestling with “the assumptions and implications contained in the convergences regarding ‘baptism, eucharist and ministry’ in the Lima text”. See Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 47.

²⁸ See “Towards a Statement on the Church: Fourth Series 1982-1986” in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of*

to communion and community. Among the issues considered here are ministry, the threefold order, historical succession, and most explicitly, the Petrine office of primacy, jurisdiction, and teaching. Not surprisingly, the latter topic demanded another round of discussions. The fifth quinquennium, in the period 1986-1991, resulted in the “Singapore Report”,²⁹ in which apostolic faith and ministry were considered, while the sixth dialogue series, in the period 1991-1996, resulted in the “Rio de Janeiro Report”,³⁰ which explored some of these aforementioned topics in a deeper fashion, as well as reflecting on mission, sacramental life, and *koinonia*. The seventh and most recent quinquennium, in the period 1997-2001, resulted in the “Brighton Report”,³¹ which dealt with the issue of teaching authority among Roman Catholics and Methodists.

The following section studies the seven series of reports for their relevancy regarding the papal office as problem and promise. These texts contain a reasonable number of papal references, which are briefly analysed to reveal how Methodist leaders, in conversation with their Roman Catholic counterparts, are talking about the Petrine office in recent decades. Concluding observations are drawn from this cursory analysis in order to assess the state and future of the papacy in the continuing ecumenical conversations between the Methodist and Roman Catholic communions.

4.3.2. Denver Report, 1971

4.3.2.1. Concerning authority and the legacy of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI

The Report talks at length about authority in the church³² as a problem in Roman Catholic-Methodist discourse, with the doctrines of the church’s infallibility or indefectibility as well as the Mariological dogmas as notable cases in point for some

Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998 (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 583-596. Hereafter referred to as FR 1986.

²⁹ See “The Apostolic Tradition: Fifth Series 1986-1991” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 597-617. Hereafter referred to as FR 1991.

³⁰ See “The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith. Sixth Series (1991-1996)” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 618-646. Hereafter referred to as FR 1996.

³¹ See “Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Catholics and Methodists” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (July 2002), 82-123. Hereafter referred to as FR 2001.

³² FR 1971, §§99-118.

of the deep ‘crevasses’ between the churches.³³ The participants underline the authority of Christ as a foundation for how churches should understand authority in the church, i.e. “in terms of service and discipleship from which all thought of triumphalism is removed”³⁴ and one that is “given in love and received in love”.³⁵ They set aside juridical and political usages of authority as being “beside the point”,³⁶ and point the ecumenical spotlight on Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI as laudable models of how better to reflect Christ’s authority in the church through love and service.³⁷ In this way, then, Methodists reflect a more positive and hopeful image of the ministry of the pope.

4.3.2.2. Concerning varying hierarchies of authority

The Report refers to the fact that the “paramount authority of Christ in the Church has in fact been regarded by both our Churches as exercised in varying and diverse modes”.³⁸ Both churches acknowledge an authority of conscience, of discipline, of Scripture, and of various elements in their respective tradition such as theology, liturgy, sacraments, the pope, and so forth.³⁹ The participants contend that when comparing the two lists of authorities of the churches, the likelihood is that these “two lists of authorities might not turn out to be as dissimilar” as might be expected.⁴⁰ Furthermore, they find it necessary, however, to “place them in a differing order and lay more stress here on one element and there on another”⁴¹ in order to shift from an abstract treatment of authority to one that relates to “the enduring purpose of our conversations, which is to bring us into living relation and communion with one another.”⁴²

In these ways, then, the Methodists discern different, albeit not dissimilar, modes of authority in the churches. While the office of the papacy does not exist in Methodism, it may coincide with other forms of superintendency. Notwithstanding

³³ Ibid., §§100-101.

³⁴ Ibid., §106.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., §108.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

these divergences, however, the participants underline the importance of how these modes of authority, such as that of the pope, contribute (or should contribute) to their communion.

4.3.3. Dublin Report, 1976

4.3.3.1. Concerning the collegial and individual aspects of ministerial structures

The Report contends that despite differences in ministerial structures between the two churches, “in both of them the collegial and individual aspect of the ordained ministry are closely related.”⁴³ The participants refer to the Roman Catholic threefold form of ministry, with a description of how these dimensions of ministry work together (i.e. the collegial dimension), as well as the distinctive role of the bishops and that of the Bishop of Rome as head (i.e. the individual dimension).⁴⁴ While Methodism structures its ministry forms differently in varying degrees,⁴⁵ it similarly reflects the collegial and individual aspects of ministry, notwithstanding the absence of a pope in church polity. In this way, then, Methodism might contain a superintendency role similar to that of the papal office, which highlights the individual facet of ministry, albeit not at the expense of the collegial dimension.

4.3.4. Honolulu Report, 1981

4.3.4.1. Concerning Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and common witness

The Report affirms the importance of speaking together in the world in the light of what they see as “encouraging signs of the activity of the Holy Spirit”⁴⁶ in the churches at present – “a quest for prayer, a care for human need and suffering, a

⁴³ FR 1976, §89.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ For example, even within Methodism there are differences: i.e. American Methodism exercises a threefold form, while British Methodism reveals a one-order form of ministry.

⁴⁶ FR 1981, §6.

passion for justice for all the oppressed, a groping hunger for truth”,⁴⁷ and more. These signs confirm among them that an opportunity and challenge to broader common witness among Christians is at the fore, a call that was signalled by Pope Paul VI in his *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.⁴⁸ In this way, the participants reflect a positive image of the pope in calling the churches to take seriously what is indeed necessary at present, i.e. common witness.

4.3.4.2. Concerning papal claims of infallibility and jurisdiction

The Report draws attention to the difficulties posed to various churches by the different “papal claims and the character of dogmatic definitions”.⁴⁹ The participants are aware of varying degrees of progress in other dialogues on various fronts regarding the papal institution, but contend “that emotions surrounding such relatively modern terms as infallibility and irreformability can be diminished if they are looked at in the light of our shared doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁰ They explain: “The papal authority, no less than any other within the Church, is a manifestation of the continuing presence of the Spirit of Love in the Church or it is nothing. Indeed it should in its exercise be pre-eminently such a manifestation.”⁵¹ For, “It was declared at Vatican I to be ‘for the building up and not the casting down on the church’ – whether of the local Church or the communion of local Churches.”⁵²

Furthermore, the participants lament that the primary aspect of “such terms as infallibility and universal and immediate jurisdiction” has been obscured or distorted by emotions and polemics.⁵³ They argue that these terms should be understood in the context and debates of their original setting. Rather than explaining these terms away, or regarding these as “claims about human qualities or glorifications of an office”,⁵⁴ they should instead “be understood in the light of the total conception and the total responsibility of teaching and disciplinary office in the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., §35.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., §36.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Church – a pastoral office mirroring the constant presence and solicitude of the Spirit within the Church, leading into truth and disciplining in love.”⁵⁵ Only then, “whatever its forms and nomenclature, can any authority be understood and legitimised.”⁵⁶

While helpful, the participants realistically concede: “it is unlikely that Methodists in the foreseeable future will feel comfortable with them [such papal claims].”⁵⁷ In the same breath, however, they acknowledge that “Methodist awareness of the papacy has enlarged and greatly altered in recent times”⁵⁸ and that in fact “the general idea of a universal service of unity within the Church, a primacy of charity mirroring the presence and work in the Church of the Spirit who is love, may well be a basis for increased understanding and convergence.”⁵⁹ In these ways, then, the participants draw attention to ongoing problematic aspects of the papacy as it presently exists, but reveal new attempts at understanding its nature and role through a new lens of a pneumatological character.

4.3.5. Nairobi Report, 1986

4.3.5.1. Concerning papal reform

The Report notes at the outset that it “deals with some of the most difficult questions Roman Catholics and Methodists have faced together”,⁶⁰ that though “there are similarities in the order and structure of the two churches, Methodists and Catholics at present differ in their doctrine of the ministry and of the teaching office.”⁶¹ It is interesting that among their opening remarks is a reference to the “reforming power of the word”⁶² in the church as evidenced in church history, which includes the reform of the papacy at different times.⁶³ In this way, then, the participants underline the need for reform in the church as far as their various structures and

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ FR 1986, Preface.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., §7.

⁶³ Ibid.

forms of ministry are concerned, which *ipso facto* includes the openness toward papal reform.

4.3.5.2. Concerning communion with the Bishop of Rome

The Report discusses different ways of being one church in *koinonia* and organic unity with reference to the Bishop of Rome. One model draws on the analogous relationship between religious orders and the Wesleyan movement as follows: “The different religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church, while fully in communion with the pope and the bishops, relate in different ways to the authority of pope and bishops.”⁶⁴ “Such relative autonomy,” they suggest, “has a recognised place within the unity of the church.”⁶⁵ Another model concerns the notion of “sister churches”,⁶⁶ which envisages “reunion among divided traditions as a family reconciliation”.⁶⁷ Another model refers to the relations between the Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Rome, whereby “different styles of devotion and church life within a single communion” are retained.⁶⁸

The participants underline the responsibility the Bishop of Rome bears in collegial fashion with his fellow bishops to “cement and express the bond of the universal fellowship”,⁶⁹ which also is the foundational component for the Roman Catholic belief in the primacy of the Bishop of Rome.⁷⁰ In these ways, the participants entertain the possibility of being in a more flexible or less rigid communion with the Roman Catholic Church and its papal office, where the ecclesial distinctives of other churches are not stifled or compromised by an imposed papal authoritarianism.

4.3.5.3. Concerning the ministry of unity through the Petrine office

The Report gives some detailed attention to the place and role of Peter as discernible within the New Testament, on which the papal institution is based in large

⁶⁴ Ibid., §24.b.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., §24.c.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., §24.d.

⁶⁹ Ibid., §32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., §36.

measure.⁷¹ Referring to the legacy of Peter, the participants affirm the need for a ministry of leadership and unity in the church, as well as acknowledging the intention of the Petrine office to faithfully carry out such a role, even though history attests to both success and failure in this regard.⁷²

Roman Catholics assert “that being in communion with the see of Rome has served as the touchstone of belonging to the church in its fullest sense”,⁷³ yet “the commission is agreed that not being in communion with the bishop of Rome does not necessarily disqualify a Christian community from belonging to the church of God”.⁷⁴ For this reason, “Methodist members are agreed that Catholic acceptance of the Roman primacy is not an impediment to churchly character.”⁷⁵ Still, as far as Christian unity is concerned, “For Roman Catholics reconciliation with the see of Rome is a necessary step towards the restoration of Christian unity.”⁷⁶ For this reason, others continue to “see the claim of the bishop of Rome as an obstacle to Christian unity.”⁷⁷

The participants accept that in some future scenario in a restored unity, it is not inconceivable that “Roman Catholic and Methodist bishops might be linked in one episcopal college and that the whole body would recognise some kind of effective leadership and primacy in the bishop of Rome.”⁷⁸ Methodists can accept what they believe to be necessary for the church as being the will of God.⁷⁹ For Methodists, this is certainly not inconceivable, although such an acceptance would be on different grounds as those held by Roman Catholics at present.⁸⁰ Moreover, Methodists are concerned about distinguishing between what in the papal office is necessary for the church as a whole as against what is specifically part of the Roman tradition;⁸¹

⁷¹ Ibid., §§41-47.

⁷² Ibid., §§49ff.

⁷³ Ibid., §56.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., §57.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., §62.

⁷⁹ Ibid., §58: “Methodists accept that whatever is properly required for the unity of the whole of Christ’s church must by that very fact be God’s will for his church. A universal primacy may well serve as focus of and ministry for the unity of the whole church.”

⁸⁰ Ibid., §62.

⁸¹ Cf. Ibid.

therefore, a dialogue on the Petrine office that applies to Methodists would need to focus on the former.

The participants highlight the problematic nature of papal infallibility for Methodists.⁸² Roman Catholics hold to this belief in reference to their belief in the church's infallibility, which is endowed through the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁸³ They explain it as follows: "When the pope teaches infallibly, infallibility is, properly speaking, not attributed to the pope, nor to the teaching, but rather to this particular act of teaching. It means that he has been prevented by God from teaching error on matters relating to salvation."⁸⁴ They add: "It does not mean that a particular teaching has been presented in the best possible way, nor does it mean that every time he teaches he does so infallibly."⁸⁵ While Methodists disagree with the papal authority so enunciated, the participants "are agreed on the need for an authoritative way of being sure, beyond doubt, concerning God's action insofar as it is crucial for our salvation."⁸⁶

4.3.6. Singapore Report, 1991

4.3.6.1. Concerning the task of episkope

The Report discusses *episkope* as concerning "the task of maintaining unity in the truth",⁸⁷ of which "teaching is the principal part".⁸⁸ According to the Roman Catholic participants, "The teaching of a common faith by the college of bishops in union with the successor of Peter ensures unity in the truth."⁸⁹ While differences still exist around the issue of how continuity in the faith is preserved, the Methodists recognise how well papal oversight and Wesley's superintendency coincide and find a significant measure of congruency.⁹⁰

⁸² Ibid., §§63ff.

⁸³ Ibid., §§68-69.

⁸⁴ Ibid., §71.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., §75.

⁸⁷ FR 1991, §93.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

4.3.7. Rio de Janeiro Report, 1996

4.3.7.1. Concerning the teaching office

The Report talks about “criteria by which the church discerns the will of God”,⁹¹ and the Roman Catholics underline the role of “the teaching office of the bishops in unity with the bishop of Rome”.⁹² They do not intend to imply that this teaching office competes with or replaces the word of God, but rather is its servant.⁹³ Still, they declare that “the bishops ‘have received the sure charism of truth,’ which may authorise them to define the doctrines drawn from the divine revelation.”⁹⁴ In this way, then, the participants highlight the positive connection between the papal office and bishops, on the one hand, in relation to the discernment of God’s will, on the other hand. This notwithstanding, Methodist reservations will persist concerning the high view of the bishops’ authority to discern truth for the church.⁹⁵

4.3.7.2. Concerning the Bishop of Rome and the church’s continuity

The Report refers to the Roman Catholic distinct hierarchical structure of the church as “an important means and guarantee given by God’s grace to preserve the continuity and the universality of the Catholic Church”,⁹⁶ based squarely “on the promise which it believes to have been given to St. Peter and the apostles ... and to have been fulfilled throughout history in the apostolic succession and the episcopal college together with its head, the bishop of Rome as the successor of St. Peter.”⁹⁷ Methodists differ in this regard, holding instead to an understanding of continuity as “preserved by the faithfulness to the apostolic teaching”⁹⁸ and “in the hands of conciliar bodies, the conferences”,⁹⁹ rather than in the papal office and a particular construct.

⁹¹ FR 1996, §62.

⁹² Ibid., §69.

⁹³ Cf. Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid., §§69-70.

⁹⁶ Ibid., §129.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., §130.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

4.3.8. Brighton Report, 2001

4.3.8.1. Concerning a papal ministry of decision-making and truth

The Report addresses the issue in the history of the church of deciding “between divergent traditions and conflicting interpretations of the Gospel”,¹⁰⁰ and refers to the role of the Roman See’s presidency with the bishops in fulfilling such a pastoral care and decision-making ministry.¹⁰¹ The Methodists find a similar responsibility through “the supervision of teaching [as] ... exercised by the Conference and by the superintendent ministers acting in its name.”¹⁰² The Petrine ministry becomes problematic, however, when the notion of infallibility is included in the exercise of such a ministry.¹⁰³ Methodists readily concede: In the exercise of the teaching office, the “Conferences formulate doctrinal statements as needed, but do not ascribe to them guaranteed freedom from error.”¹⁰⁴ Instead, “Methodists understand themselves to be under an obligation to accept as authoritative what can clearly be shown to be in agreement with the Scriptures.”¹⁰⁵

4.3.8.2. Concerning Pope John Paul II and commitment to mission

The Report affirms the ecumenical imperative for understanding and promoting the fulfillment of mission.¹⁰⁶ Recognising both churches and their representatives as pioneers and models for unity and mission, the participants refer to the continuing passion of Pope John Paul II, especially as communicated in *Ut Unum Sint*, concerning mission on the basis of ecumenical commitment, which characterises the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church at present.¹⁰⁷ In this way, then, a positive image of the pope is communicated as an image coinciding with Methodist ideals and shared by Methodist leaders and their churches.

¹⁰⁰ FR 2001, §19.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. The Report notes the Roman Catholic distinctives more succinctly and at length towards the end: §§111-116.

¹⁰² Ibid., §19.

¹⁰³ Ibid., §20. Also, cf. §41, §75, §78, §82, §110.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., §21.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., §28.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

4.3.8.3. Concerning the personal ministry of episcopate

The Report builds on its remarks on the teaching office and decision-making ministry, and highlights the ministry of oversight as “of key importance among these forms of service.”¹⁰⁸ Both Roman Catholics and Methodists affirm this pastoral oversight, which “has always included authoritative teaching and preaching”,¹⁰⁹ as reflecting the important place and role of “charismatic individuals whose personal ministry has been vital for the life of Christ’s Church”¹¹⁰ – with John Wesley and the pope as cases in point. The corporate dimension of episcopate, however, is also noted.¹¹¹ The participants refer to the need to keep both personal and structural aspects of oversight in balance.¹¹²

4.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE METHODIST – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

Some remarks are now offered regarding the problem and promise of the Petrine ministry in respect of the Methodist tradition, with special consideration given to those signs of stuckness and hope that require earnest and critical consideration for advancing the theological and ecumenical encounter between Roman Catholics and Methodists in the immediate future. At the heart of their theological and ecumenical situations of stuckness and hope, are ecclesiological questions. Frederick Bliss refers to David Carter’s observation, that the more both communions examine their respective ecclesiologies, the greater the likelihood that they will discover that ecclesial reconciliation is not an impossibility.¹¹³ The role of their respective ecclesiologies in effecting both closedness and openness, however, should be noted and further explored.

4.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. §51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Cf. §76.

¹¹² Cf. Ibid., §99, §108. In the latter, the participants underline the notion of collegiality in the ministry of authoritative teaching.

¹¹³ See Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 166; cf. David Carter, “A Methodist Reaction to *Ut Unum Sint*” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (1997), 125-137. See also Carter, “Can the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches be Reconciled?”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 6.

The preceding survey of Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue texts reveals that Roman Catholics and Methodists experience a fair degree of theological overlap vis-à-vis the ministry of unity as played out in their respective structures. This notwithstanding, a number of issues concerning the Petrine office still feature as a stumbling block in their relations. These include the nature and authority of the Bishop of Rome and the teaching office; the notion of episcopal succession; papal claims of infallibility, jurisdiction and primacy; and the Roman Catholic insistence that communion with the see of Rome is an essential step towards the restoration of Christian unity.

4.4.1.1. The problem of a rigid ecclesiology

Among the various ecclesiological tensions within Roman Catholic-Methodist discourse, is the Methodist reservation of the Roman Catholic position that defines ecclesiality as necessarily including communion with the Roman see. Churches lacking communion with the Bishop of Rome are regarded as devoid of an essential ecclesial component. Methodists find such an ecclesiology extremely problematic, where a distinctive church order and structure of ministry is elevated to a primary level in the hierarchy of truths and, *ipso facto*, assumes a church-dividing status.

In Methodism, the notion of “connexionalism” is of utmost importance for interpreting the bonds of communion and the nature of ecclesiality. Herein lie both similar as well as distinct and divergent elements of belief. On the latter, Methodist ecclesiology avoids a theological framework that invests primary authority in a single person of ministry for defining its ecclesial integrity. As Carter explains, the bonds of communion are more varied: Local churches in communion are maintained in direct reference to “the outworking of the ‘connexional principle’ with its interlocking levels of koinonia from the ‘class meeting’, the small fellowship group meeting under the leadership of an individual responsible to the pastor of the local ‘society’, through the ‘circuit’ and ‘district’ to the level of the national Conference”.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Carter, “Can the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches be Reconciled?”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 4.

In direct juxtaposition to Roman Catholicism, Methodists argue for an ecclesiology that does not ‘unchurch’ other communions on the basis of their respective orders and structures of ministry.¹¹⁵ In this regard, Carter draws attention to Wesley’s position, which “recognised the existence of *koinonia* with all those who shared the same basic faith and search for Christian holiness”.¹¹⁶ For such reasons, “Methodists have shown considerable flexibility in their relations with other churches.”¹¹⁷ Unless Roman Catholic ecclesiological rigidity is resolved around the issue of communion with the Petrine office, this serious theological hurdle will continue to impede the advancement of the papal dialogue by Methodist churches and their theologians.

4.4.1.2. The problem of a static ecclesiology

Another noteworthy ecclesiological hurdle between Roman Catholics and Methodists rests with what Methodists might refer to as a static or contra-dynamic theological understanding of the church in Roman Catholic thought and practice. For Methodists, such contentious issues as apostolic succession, infallibility, and jurisdiction serve as cases in point of Roman Catholicism’s preoccupation with technical and institutional semantics that do not bode well for the church’s primary focus on ministry and witness.

J. Robert Nelson notes that the formation of Methodist churches did not “begin by agreeing to form a new church body and then undertake a study of the Scriptures and the tradition to determine what optimum form and polity it should have.”¹¹⁸ Instead, “Methodist polity was a pragmatic application to the given situation of conceptions and practices which were already familiar, or which seemed expedient, to the people.”¹¹⁹ Applying this to apostolic succession, for example, the function of bishops in Methodism is rendered far more important in practice than the question

¹¹⁵ Cf. Methodist Faith and Order Committee, *Called to Love and Praise*, Report to Conference (Methodist Publishing House, 1995), §2.4.9; Wainwright, “Methodism” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 375; Francis Frost, “Methodism” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 754.

¹¹⁶ Carter, “A Methodist Reaction to *Ut Unum Sint*”, *One in Christ*, 126; cf. 127.

¹¹⁷ Wainwright, “Methodism” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 375.

¹¹⁸ J. Robert Nelson, “Methodism and the Papacy” in McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians?*, 150-151.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

of their order or their episcopal character.¹²⁰ For, as Wesley contended, the goal “of all ecclesiastical order”¹²¹ is meant to “bring souls from the power of Satan to God, and to bring them up in His fear and love.”¹²² More specifically, “Order, then, is so valuable as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is nothing worth.”¹²³

In this light, therefore, Methodists wrestle with the seemingly static ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism that forms the bedrock for the doctrine of the papal institution. They do not readily discern the dynamic and more functional character of the papacy; on the contrary, the endless controversies surrounding papal claims of Scriptural warrant, infallibility, primacy, and jurisdiction, tend to cloud the relationship between the Petrine office and its dynamic contribution to church faith and life. Consequently, Methodists are not theologically comfortable with the office of the pope in Roman Catholicism.

4.4.1.3. *The problem of a dichotomous ecclesiology*

One of the most critical problems raised by Methodists is the ecclesiological differentiation advanced within Roman Catholicism, in which the papal institution is embedded. As Methodists see it, Roman Catholics invest too much authority and power in bishops, *a fortiori* in the Bishop of Rome, and arguably at the expense of the role and involvement of the laity. In other words, notwithstanding the validly distinctive roles of clergy and laity, Methodists are reticent about the perceived dichotomy between clergy and laity within Roman Catholicism, which eventually accounts for their uneasiness towards the office of the pope. The pope pronounces doctrinal teachings *for* the church, but not in conversation *with* the church. Notwithstanding the legitimacy of fulfilling an episcopal role in the church, the Bishop of Rome is perceived to be authoritarian and irrelevant to ordinary believers at the grassroots level, which is a serious concern for Methodists.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 155.

¹²¹ Cited in Wainwright, “The Gift Which He on One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 66-67. See John Wesley, Letter of June 25, 1746, “to ‘John Smith’” in John Telford (Ed.), *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. II (London: Epworth, 1931), 77f. See also Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 73-87.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Bruce W. Robbins and David Carter, in referring to Methodist connexionalism as practiced in Britain and North America in the nineteenth century, bemoan how the pastoral office - “which was believed to be of divine institution in the Church, and endowed with necessary prerogatives of rulership and discipline”¹²⁴ – was experienced as an “exclusive ministerial authority”¹²⁵ that “created tensions and, indeed, schisms in both British and American Methodism.”¹²⁶ More candidly, “Many felt that it exercised an inordinate degree of power at the expense of the rights of the laity.”¹²⁷ Fortunately, for Methodists, “the practice of connexional authority was gradually modified in order to allow laypeople more say”¹²⁸ at the local as well as Conference levels. They prided themselves on the fact that their system “avoided the clerical domination of the Anglican and Roman Catholic systems, while ensuring that the ministry never became the cipher of powerful lay interests”.¹²⁹

Methodists find the ecclesiology of Roman Catholicism problematic when measured against the connexional principle, insofar as it supports an independency and hierarchicalism “that is detached from the whole People of God and is seen as set over them.”¹³⁰ In direct opposition, Methodists advance a less dichotomous or differentiated view of the church and its ministry. Robbins and Carter explain:

Ministry, rather, is seen as a service for the people of God, set in the midst of them and accountable both to the whole body and to Christ. Connexionalism always involves partnership, especially that of the laity with the ordained ministry. Historically, the Wesleyan position saw ministry as neither above the people, as in Tridentine Catholicism, or below them, as in contemporary Baptist and Congregational practice. It saw the ministry, the ‘pastoral Office’, as endowed with scriptural prerogative precisely in order that it might serve and equip the people for their ministry of witness and service.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Bruce W. Robbins and David Carter, “Connexionalism and *Koinonia*: A Wesleyan Contribution to Ecclesiology” in *One in Christ*, 324.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. They refer, moreover, to James Rigg who “argued that a more exclusively clerical form of control had suited early Methodism, when the laity had generally enjoyed the most rudimentary of educational standards. In later years more ‘sharing of power’ was appropriate and even necessary.”

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 334.

¹³¹ Ibid.

4.4.2. Signs of Hope

The analysis of the dialogue texts reveals that Methodists are increasingly finding a measure of ecclesiological convergence, notwithstanding the important areas of concern that are raised. Wainwright unveils a critical ecumenical key in this regard: “It seems that the two parties come closest when the Wesleyan character of Methodism is sharply profiled, for it is there that a scriptural and creedal faith comes to expression in sacramental life, and in the search for personal and social holiness, and in an evangelistic and charitable concern for all humankind.”¹³²

Consequently, the Methodist participants affirm Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI as noteworthy examples of leaders who reflected a model of leadership and authority immersed in love and service; that papal leadership and Wesleyan leadership have been concerned with similar ends of unity and superintendency; that recent popes have reflected a similar Methodist concern and passion for common witness and ‘scriptural holiness’; that renewal and reform of church structures such as the papacy is in view; that several creative ways of being in communion with the see of Rome exist; that the Bishop of Rome fulfills a personal and propitious ministry of episcopate that could benefit Methodists in a similar way in which Wesley’s superintendency model benefits the churches; and so on.

Other strategic points of ecumenical entry are discernible within the aforementioned dialogue texts. These potentially contribute to a heuristic approach by which both Methodist and Roman Catholic church leaders and theologians could further explore around the dialogue on the Petrine office. The following areas for possible *entrée* and engagement by Methodists are identified and noted accordingly for their prospective import.

4.4.2.1. On the grounds for ecclesial affinity and cooperation

¹³² Wainwright, “Methodist-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 760. See also David Carter, “The Ecumenical Wesleys” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (February 2004), 10-15 *passim*.

In the first round of discussions, the participants take cognisance of the phenomenal changes in both the Roman Catholic and Methodist outlook, citing the Second Vatican Council as a radical turning point in their relations.¹³³ They then highlight the grounds for ecclesial affinity in rightly referring to “the central place held in both traditions by the ideal of personal sanctification, growth in holiness through daily life in Christ”.¹³⁴ For both traditions, “holiness is rooted in theology and in disciplined life”.¹³⁵ For this reason, as Carter notes, many Methodists and Roman Catholics have come to recognise in the early twentieth century “that their common concern for holiness represented an important bridge across the many differences.”¹³⁶

In their second round of discussions, the participants emphasise that the Church’s witness is “fundamental to her being”¹³⁷ and that their “witness can be fully effective only when the churches witness together, not out of expediency or for practical convenience but for the sake of the truth being proclaimed and lived”.¹³⁸ They add that a “strong missionary impulse is common to us, and recently our churches have publicly recognised both that it must continue and that it must develop new forms of expression”.¹³⁹ The words at a 1972 consultation are, therefore, most appropriate: “we want to stimulate one another to common action, so that the world which is starving for lack of good news may not through our unnecessary divisions be prevented from receiving the food of the Gospel”.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ FR 1971, §§3-4.

¹³⁴ Ibid., §7.

¹³⁵ Ibid. It becomes clear that both communities are rightly concerned with cultivating “Scriptural holiness” and its spread, with Methodists particularly grateful for this emphasis already laid out in “Lumen Gentium” 9-10 and in its chapter on “The Universal Call to Holiness” (cf. §50). “The disciplined life of the early Methodist, aimed at renewing a lax Church,” they proceed, “set standards for the whole of Methodism which have found Roman Catholic parallels” (§8). Moreover, in engendering a vision of common mission, one of seven practical proposals states that “in all ecumenical encounters there should be effort to begin dialogue towards common Christian moral standards” (§10.4), while another proposal urges that “the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches explore with others further possibilities of social cooperation at various levels” (§10.6). Furthermore, the participants lament the nominal degree to which their churches have applied these proposals, and urged one another to reconsider “the basic task of joint witness to fundamental Christian values” (§11).

¹³⁶ Carter, “Can the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches be Reconciled?”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 1.

¹³⁷ FR 1976, §11a.

¹³⁸ Ibid., §11b.

¹³⁹ Ibid., §21.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., §25.

Turning the ecumenical spotlight on their grounds for ecclesial affinity and cooperation, the participants draw attention to a critically important and strategic avenue through which to potentially find constructive engagement on the Petrine problem. In one way, it challenges the Roman Catholic insistence that communion with the Bishop of Rome is mandatory for communion with the Roman Catholic Church, by underlining the strong affinity in ministry ideals shared by both communions.

Carter would, as a Methodist, argue that if the particular communion concerned nurtures among its members these aforementioned ideals of holiness and truth and witness – or, as he says: “nurtures faith to the extent of perfect love”¹⁴¹ – there are radical ecclesiological implications. For, “that must imply for it a genuine ecclesial reality, albeit with a different *typos* of devotion and maybe a different ordering from those prevalent in other Christian communities.”¹⁴² In this regard, he notes: “Both our Churches are being forced to wrestle with the ecclesial status of bodies that we regard as having departed from apostolic norms in important respects but which we cannot deny to have been the home of saints with all the hallmarks of true Christian piety.”¹⁴³ Such an ecclesiological paradox thus challenges the Roman Catholic Church, that of affirming “the ecclesial reality of Churches, which nevertheless, in the judgement of the Roman Catholic Church, lack the sacrament of order and therefore the fullness of the Eucharist.”¹⁴⁴

Given the strong reservations and criticisms in the ecumenical community vis-à-vis the longstanding and never-ceasing Roman Catholic insistence, Methodists will be interested to see how the Roman Catholic Church proceeds in the future discourses in a way that credits rather than trivialises such ecclesial affinities. At the same time, not a few Methodists are not ‘holding their ecumenical breath’ in anticipation of Roman Catholic repositioning on this point. Others, however, see some potential hope in exploring further with Roman Catholics how communion with the Bishop of Rome might be attained, albeit in a manner that still reflects Methodist autonomy.

¹⁴¹ David Carter, “A Methodist Reaction to *Ut Unum Sint*” in *Ecumenical Trends*, 126.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 127.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

In another way, these remarks challenge Methodists to potentially understand and experience the papal office as a genuine, *a fortiori* key partner, in their joint witness for truth and holiness. Not only are Methodists and Roman Catholics urged to give renewed attention to those divisions that prevent the world from discerning the core of the gospel, they are also urged to reflect on and be open to new forms of expression. Methodists have not in past times regarded the papacy as such, but are hereby challenged to explore further how the work of the Roman Catholic pope is potentially a work of witness that coincides with and supports the Methodist ideals of truth and holiness.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, it challenges the papal office, too, to maintain accountability to these ideals if it is to be regarded and experienced as a ministry of the good. To the extent, therefore, that Methodists can discern this ministry within the Petrine ministry, and insofar as a common commitment to this common witness is realised, important ground could be covered in Roman Catholic-Methodist discourse.

4.4.2.2. On the sovereignty and authority of the Holy Spirit

In the third round of discussions, the participants focus on the theme of the Holy Spirit “in the hope that it would shed fresh light on various questions which have challenged both our traditions.”¹⁴⁶ They declare that the Spirit “is everywhere present”¹⁴⁷ and “eternal”.¹⁴⁸ In fact, “There was never a time when he was not, and there will never be a time when he will cease to be.”¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the Spirit is “God’s Gift of Himself to His People ... the Lord and Giver of Life ... the love of God

¹⁴⁵ Cf. FR 1976, §21. See especially FR 1986, §§41-61, in which the legacy and role of Peter is detailed, with implications for the Petrine office in moral witness and leadership. The section on “The Petrine Office” deals firstly with Peter’s place and role in the New Testament, a ministry that may plausibly be understood as one of moral stewardship. Peter is “portrayed as spokesman for the others, either answering or asking questions” (§41), he “exercises a certain leadership in the affairs of the early church” (§42), he is both apostle as well as “a presbyter exhorting fellow presbyters to be good shepherds” (§45). The many images and roles associated with him include “missionary fisherman ... pastoral shepherd ... witness and martyr ... recipient of special revelation ... confessor and preacher of the true faith ... [and] guardian against false teaching” (§47). Interestingly, the report draws attention to the legacy of Peter’s roles: “The fact that Peter’s ministry in the life of the church is emphasised even in New Testament passages written after his death indicates that images of Peter had continued importance for the church” (§53). The participants later assert: “Just as many images are used of Peter in the New Testament ... so a variety of images may be used of the pope” (§61).

¹⁴⁶ FR 1981, §2.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, §8.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

reaching out to humankind for its transformation and salvation”.¹⁵⁰ The work of the Spirit is discernible in the work of newness,¹⁵¹ justification and regeneration,¹⁵² Christian community,¹⁵³ and transformation.¹⁵⁴

In other words, the participants highlight the sovereignty and nature of the Holy Spirit’s work as a resourceful backdrop for engaging the churches on difficult questions.¹⁵⁵ Methodists might be challenged to see the Petrine institution as a structural space in which the Spirit is present in the light of the Spirit’s omnipresence, that the papacy of the present and (perhaps, more difficultly) the past possibly reflects the presence and work of the Spirit in some way(s) in the light of the Spirit’s eternal nature,¹⁵⁶ but also that the Petrine ministry could be assessed in the future in relation to the extent that it continues and contributes to the Spirit’s work of newness, community, and transformation.

The participants, therefore, specifically address the issue of papal authority in their reflection on the Holy Spirit and authority in the church. They remind the churches that all authority flows from Christ’s authority as mediated through the Spirit, and is “part of God’s good gift”.¹⁵⁷ In this regard, they note: “Whether it be the personal authority of holiness or the charism of episcopate conferred by the Spirit on the ordained ministry, whether it be teaching or disciplinary, authority implies that what is propounded, commanded or recommended ought to be accepted on the ground that it comes from this source.”¹⁵⁸ In a hard-hitting and provocative statement, they then assert: “The papal authority, no less than any other within the Church, is *a manifestation of the continuing presence of the Spirit of Love* in the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., §11.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., §12.

¹⁵² Ibid., §§13-18.

¹⁵³ Ibid., §§19-21.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §22.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. FR 1996, §5, §7.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. FR 1986, §26, which underlines the sovereignty and providence of God in human history, including the various spiritual traditions within the broader community of communions. The papal structure could be viewed as well as explored within this paradigm. “Christians, sharing the same faith, relate to God in a variety of ways, often helped by spiritual traditions which have developed, under the providence of God, in the course of history. Some of these traditions are embodied in and furthered by religious societies, renewal movements, and pious associations or institutes. The church should protect legitimate variety both by ensuring room for its free development and by directly promoting new forms of it.”

¹⁵⁷ FR 1981, §33.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Church *or it is nothing*. Indeed it should in its exercise be pre-eminently such a manifestation” [italics mine].¹⁵⁹

Wainwright asserts that this is “the pneumatological perspective set by Honolulu for the emotional and theological clarification of the delicate issues of authority in the Church, and particularly the contentious matter of the papacy”.¹⁶⁰ This perspective demands further exploration and reflection for its potential import for the Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue on the Petrine office, against the background reality that the pneumatological paradigm is fulfilling a distinctively promising role in unlocking the ecumenical impasse on several fronts among the churches.

The participants anticipate that Methodists will continue in the foreseeable future to feel somewhat uncomfortable with the papal office. Nevertheless, what may have been a stumbling block may very well potentially become a stepping-stone for Methodists as they strive not only for deeper communion, but also for a broader Christian ministry and witness of authority through God’s Spirit in the world. For Roman Catholics, there is also the challenge for the papacy to be kept accountable for its exercise in accordance with those aforementioned ideals that reflect the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Or else, for Methodists and others, it is nothing!

4.4.2.3. *On the connexionality of the church*

In the second round of discussions, the participants draw attention to their mutual regard for the safeguarding of the church’s continuity with the church of the New Testament. In this regard, they refer to the importance of apostolic succession, notwithstanding differences in how either communion understands it. Whereas Roman Catholics view succession as a normative event, Methodists do not. Still, Methodists affirm that they “preserve a form of ministerial succession in practice and can regard a succession of ordination from the earliest times as a valuable

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., §35.

¹⁶⁰ Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 47.

symbol of the church's continuity with the church of the New Testament, though they would not use it as a *criterion*.”¹⁶¹

Furthermore, the participants underline the ministry of episcopate as a specific dimension of ministry, mutually recognised and appreciated in both communions. While recognising that “*episcopate* is exercised in different ways in their churches”,¹⁶² they stress that “in each case it is carefully ordered with the purpose of the building-up and discipline of the faithful, the training of the young, the maintenance of the unity and peace of the church, and in the planning and direction of mission and evangelism.”¹⁶³

In the fourth round of discussions, areas of divergence between Roman Catholics and Methodists are noted concerning structures of ministry, especially in relation to church government and the threefold order of ministry. They note: “Both Roman Catholics and Methodists believe that *episcopate* of the churches is a divinely given function. The Roman Catholic Church and many Methodist churches express *episcopate* through bishops”.¹⁶⁴ “Methodist churches which have an ordained ministry but do not have bishops, believing them not to be essential to a church, have considered adopting them as an enrichment of their own life and to promote the unity of Christians; such bishops would be a focus of unity and a sign of the historic continuity of the church.”¹⁶⁵

Proceeding to a discussion on primacy, the participants contend that all local churches require and depend on a ministry of leadership.¹⁶⁶ According to early church development, “such leadership came to be exercised by the bishop, who was a focus of unity. Eventually churches were grouped in provinces, regions, and patriarchates, in which archbishops, primates, and patriarchs exercised a similar unifying role in service to the *koinonia*.”¹⁶⁷ Enquiring somewhat rhetorically, they raise the question of “whether the whole church needs a leader to exercise a similar

¹⁶¹ FR 1976, §87.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, §88.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ FR 1986, §34.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, §35.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, §49.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

unifying role in service to the worldwide *koinonia*”,¹⁶⁸ and then point to the ministry of universal unity already exercised by the Roman see.¹⁶⁹ The Methodists affirm: “A universal primacy might well serve as focus of and ministry for the unity of the whole church.”¹⁷⁰

In the fifth round of discussions, the participants highlight the ordained ministry as a sphere of ministry bound up with the gifts of the Spirit. They point out that even though “there was at the beginning no single pattern, the ordained ministry was a gift to the church for leadership in its corporate and worshiping life, for the maintenance and deepening of its order and structure, for the organisation of its missionary witness, and for discernment in understanding and applying the Gospel.”¹⁷¹ They add:

As the community is renewed from one Lord’s day to the next, it is nourished by the tradition it has received, and responsibility for this is especially entrusted to those ministers who inherit the apostolic function of oversight in the community. The function of oversight entails on the part of the ministers a solicitude for all the churches: they are charged to ensure that the community remain one, that it grow in holiness, that it preserves its catholicity, and that it be faithful to apostolic teaching and to the commission of evangelisation given by Christ himself.¹⁷²

The aforementioned remarks from the different rounds of discussions apropos of a ministry of unity, leadership, oversight, and primacy, are not unrelated or even necessarily incongruent with Methodist faith and polity. As Carter points out, “Both our Churches have always placed great emphasis on the universality and interconnectedness of the world Church. For Catholics this has been focussed by the Petrine ministry, for Methodists it has been expressed by the ‘connexional

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., §50.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., §51.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., §58.

¹⁷¹ FR 1991, §161: “As time passed, the church was led by the Spirit to recognise the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon as normative; some other patterns of ministry that may be discerned in the New Testament became assimilated to the threefold one” (§61). Methodists may formally recognise the office of the bishop in the ordained ministry, and may also be open to recognising the threefold order of ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, but most certainly would question the normative value attributed to the threefold order.

¹⁷² Ibid., §74.

principle’.”¹⁷³ Methodists and Roman Catholics differ on points of emphasis, where Methodists underline corporate episcopate and collegiality, while Roman Catholics underline personal episcopate and primacy.

According to Robbins and Carter, “Methodist connexionalism originated as a disciplinary and missionary device within the early Methodist societies”¹⁷⁴ out of Wesley’s concern “to enforce uniform standards of discipline within them, the aim always being the most effective pursuit of the quest for Christian holiness.”¹⁷⁵ According to James Rigg, the foremost apologist for connexionalism in the nineteenth century, connexionalism provided the most effective structuring for mission.¹⁷⁶ Geoffrey Wainwright explains how early Methodists understood themselves to be “those ‘in connexion with Mr. Wesley’, ... gathered into structured ‘Societies’ for the mutual support and continued growth of the ‘Members’ in faith and holiness (towards ‘perfect love’).”¹⁷⁷

As one connected people, with Wesley as a central point of reference, the Methodist connexion comprised various bonds of communion, viz. what Rigg labelled a “circulating pastorate”¹⁷⁸ and what Wainwright refers to as “a unitive ‘superintendency’”,¹⁷⁹ but also the Conference as the principal organ of episcopate within Methodism, which all contributed to their sense of cohesion. In these ways, therefore, Methodism has always reflected a veritable commitment to a ministry of leadership, unity, episcopate, and primacy, in both personal and corporate dimensions within church faith and order.

¹⁷³ Carter, “A Methodist Reaction to *Ut Unum Sint*”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 130. For this reason, he posits, “there is a natural relationship between connexionalism and the Petrine ministry waiting to be teased out” (§131).

¹⁷⁴ Robbins and Carter, “Connexionalism and *Koinonia*”, *One in Christ*, 322.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Referred to in Ibid., but cf. J.H. Rigg, *The Connexional Economy of Wesleyan Methodism*, 2nd ed. (London, 1878); *A Comparative View of Church Organisations* (London, 1887).

¹⁷⁷ Wainwright, “The Gift Which He on One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 65. Moreover, Wesley thought of it in the following terms: “of his ‘power of admitting into and excluding from the Societies under my care; of choosing and removing Stewards [i.e. officers of the Societies]; of receiving or not receiving Helpers [i.e. preachers]; of appointing them when, where and how to help me; and of desiring any of them to meet me, when I see good.”

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid., 68. See J.H. Rigg, *The Principles of Wesleyan Methodism*, 2nd ed. (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1850), 90.

¹⁷⁹ Wainwright, “The Gift Which He on One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 68.

Roman Catholics and Methodists share much in common, in this regard, albeit with varying emphases. Further exploration of this congruency contributes directly to the prevailing discourse on the Petrine ministry. On the one hand, it challenges Methodists to find parallels between the 'living Peter' and the 'living Wesley', thus providing a theological and ecclesial platform for understanding and potentially appreciating the role of the Bishop of Rome as a legitimate and propitious ministry of the good.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, it challenges Roman Catholics to learn from the Wesleyan model the priorities of subsidiarity, collegiality, corporate episcopate, the involvement of the laity in decision-making responsibilities, and so on.¹⁸¹ To the extent that both challenges are heeded, important progress could be facilitated vis-à-vis the Petrine dialogue.¹⁸²

4.4.3. Concluding Remarks

The papacy is still problematic for Methodists, yet promising on certain fronts. The Wesleyan tradition has a valuable contribution to offer the new dialogue on the Petrine office. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of the Good, the case for Methodist participation and reception could be well advanced.

¹⁸⁰ See FR 2001, *passim*. For example, cf. Carter, "The Ecumenical Wesleys", *Ecumenical Trends*, 12-13.

¹⁸¹ FR 2001, *passim*.

¹⁸² David Carter states it well: "The ecclesiological debate, so vital to the future of the Ecumenical Movement, from the standpoint of asking what each tradition needs to *receive* from others in order that it may more fully live the apostolicity of the one holy Church and *contribute* from the richness of its own particular, providential heritage to the catholicity of the whole. For some churches, true ecclesiological development towards fuller catholicity and apostolicity may involve receiving ministries it has previously lacked, such as the episcopate or the Petrine ministry; for others, it may involve reform in the exercise of existing ministries or conciliar forms in such a way that the proper dignity and right of local churches to their own customs is enhanced and safeguarded and the prophetic voice of the laity is heard in council alongside of the 'apostolic' voice of the ministry." See David Carter, "Two Ecumenical Pioneers" in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (April 2003), 13. See also Nelson, "Methodists and the Papacy" in McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians?*, 161-174.

CHAPTER 5

REFORMED CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE REFORMING WORD

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2004, Archbishop Mario Conti of Glasgow addressed the city's Roman Catholics on the life and death of Scotland's only canonised martyr, St John Ogilvie.¹ During this 425th anniversary of Ogilvie's birth, the archbishop highlighted the seventeenth-century saint's Reformed background as well as his later entrance into the Society of Jesus as a priest and missionary. His ministry, however, was cut short when his former Protestant brethren saw to his extreme suffering and eventual hanging in March 1615. The reference to Ogilvie's martyrdom is ecumenically telling for several reasons.

In the first place, it draws attention to the intensity of the embittered relationship between Roman Catholics and other churches (such as the Reformed tradition that Ogilvie formally abandoned). If, as Frederick Bliss points out - that it was the choice of such persons as Calvin "to create a tradition even further [than Luther] from Catholicism, resulting in a separation"² – it seems only logical that such tension would characterise the relationship between these two traditions in distinctive fashion. That is why, according to Robert F. McNamara, the introduction of the Reformation into Scotland drew a line not so much between Roman Catholics and Anglicans, for instance, as between Roman Catholics and Presbyterian Calvinists, with Ogilvie as an apt case in point.³

¹ Cited in "Catholics urged to face memories and forgive" in *The Tablet* (13 March 2004), 37.

² Frederick M. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church Is Ecumenical and What She Is Doing About It* (Franklin: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 126.

³ Robert F. McNamara, "St. John Ogilvie" at www.stthomasirondequoit.com/SaintsAlive/id195.htm. Accessed 20/08/2004.

In the second place, Ogilvie's martyrdom draws a connection between the embittered relationship between these two traditions and the subject of the papacy. According to Archbishop Conti, "The principal cause of his [Ogilvie's] martyrdom was his adherence to the primacy of the Pope in matters spiritual."⁴ In this regard, the broader point of contention between Ogilvie and his adversaries involved the question of authority and allegiance, which lay behind the messy account of ridicule, interrogation, and torture. Malcolm Brennan notes that Ogilvie was examined in the attempt to concretely establish that he "was a ring leader in a treasonous plot against the kingdom, and this entailed questions about regal authority and due obedience."⁵ The questions that Ogilvie faced, while viewed by some "as mere tricks to turn up an excuse for hanging a papist, were to many others serious political and philosophical and theological questions about the legitimacy of authority, civil and ecclesiastical, and therefore questions of obedience and loyalty."⁶

According to the undisputed founder of the Reformed tradition, John Calvin, the papal office was not merely corrupted, but an illegitimate institution in essence.⁷ It

⁴ Cited in "Catholics urged to face memories and forgive", *The Tablet*, 37. At the same time, Conti concedes that there was also "an overtly political reason" for the saint's martyrdom, in that Ogilvie posed an apparent threat to King James VI and his claim to religious supremacy.

⁵ Malcolm Brennan, "English Martyrs: Blessed John Ogilvie" in *The Angelus*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (November 1978), at www.sspx.ca/Angelus/index1978.htm#November1978. Accessed 20/08/2004. Brennan includes the following illustrative dialogue: "After one of his several interrogations before civil and ecclesiastical authorities, a bishop Andrew Knox, mindful of his own reformed clergy, said to him, 'You have a sharp wit, Mr. Ogilvie. I wish I had many of your sort with me; I would make good use of them.' Ogilvie retorted, 'I would rather follow the hangman to the gallows, for you are going straight to the devil.' The bishop was abashed at the un-ecumenical response to his compliment. 'How dare you talk like that to me?' 'I beg your pardon, my lord,' replied the prisoner. 'I have not learned to speak like a courtier. I will not flatter. I respect your secular rank, and I honor your gray hairs, knowing your age. But I give nothing for your episcopal dignity. You are a layman', he told the bishop, 'and you have no more spiritual jurisdiction than your stick.' The bishop made the mistake of pursuing the repartee: 'I am sorry that bread and butter made you turn papist' - to him who had given up so much and was about to give up all."

⁶ Ibid. Brennan explains: "The questions were particularly complex in the seventeenth century, even from the beginning. Puritans like John Milton were trying to establish the autonomy of the individual, especially an individual fortified with the privately interpreted Word of God; Anglican divines like Richard Hooker wished to establish the authority of the episcopacy, somehow under a king but not under a pope; monarchists like James, then on the throne of England and Scotland asserted theories of the divine right of kings such as never were heard before; and philosophers like Thomas Hobbes gave justifications for absolute civil power as the only way of controlling a savage mankind. The question of authority led the Puritan Parliament to decapitate James' son, Charles I, in mid-century and it led to the English Civil War later in the century. None of these great minds or mighty events settled the matter, as the present century attests."

⁷ See Lukas Vischer, "The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today" in James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: "Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue". A Symposium Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 137-138.

was considered the result of an erroneous development that obstructed the true presence of Christ in the church, *ipso facto*, Antichrist.⁸ Given the papal office and its particular claims to divine institution, jurisdiction and authority, it is not difficult to account for the extent to which it paved the way for tension with Calvin and his followers in the Reformed tradition.⁹ In the light of all these aforementioned factors, this chapter investigates the ways in which the papal office is treated within the new ecumenical relationship between Roman Catholics and Reformed believers.

5.2. THE NATURE OF REFORMED CHRISTIANITY

The Reformed tradition emerged under the leadership of John Calvin (1509-1564) during the sixteenth-century Genevan Reformation at a time of religious unrest that was directed at attempts to reform the church.¹⁰ As Jane Dempsey Douglass points out, “Calvin was deeply shaped by participation during his student days in the Catholic humanist and biblical reforming movement represented by Erasmus and Lefèvre d’Etaples, as well as by the writings of Luther and Bucer, the chief reformer in Strasbourg.”¹¹

During this time the lines between the Roman Catholic Church and various reform movements hardened, with Calvin’s teaching becoming extremely influential for those in Geneva and abroad, which progressively led to the dividing line becoming permanent. For the record, as Lukas Vischer makes clear, the formation of “separate Reformed churches occurred against the will and hope of the Reformers”¹² since it

⁸ Ibid., 138. For a helpful and succinct overview of the papacy in Calvin’s thinking and teaching, see Ed. A.J.D. Van der Borght, *Het ambt her-dacht: De gereformeerde ambtstheologie in het licht van het rapport Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Lima, 1982) van de theologische commissie Faith and Order van de Wereldraad van Kerken* (Amsterdam: Meinema, 2000), 159-161.

⁹ Vischer, “The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, passim.

¹⁰ Cf. David Steinmetz, “Reformation” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 963-966.

¹¹ Jane Dempsey Douglass, “A Reformed Perspective on the Ecumenical Movement”, Ecumenical Convocation Address at Princeton Theological Seminary (30 September 1996), in *Religion Online* (1999) at www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=421. Accessed 20/08/2004.

¹² Lukas Vischer, “The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets” in Jean-Jacques Bauswein and Lukas Vischer (Eds), *The Reformed Family Worldwide: A Survey of Reformed Churches, Theological Schools, and International Organisations. A project of the International Reformed Centre John Knox, Geneva, Switzerland* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1.

was by no means their intention “to set up a new church.”¹³ On the contrary, what was aimed for was “a movement to renew the whole church according to God’s Word, but separate Reformed churches came into existence because the program of reform was rejected by the Roman church.”¹⁴

The medieval church authorities resisted attempts at reform on the grounds that the authority of the church as it was, was based on perpetuity or antiquity as enumerated by the opposing Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto, i.e. that it was what it was because of general consent, longstanding beliefs, and beliefs enjoying universal reception.¹⁵ In direct reaction to Sadoletto’s argument, Calvin presented the “Word-of-God principle” for understanding the legitimacy and authority of the church and its activities and structures: “When you describe it as that which in all parts, as well as at the present time, in every region of the earth, being united and consenting in

¹³ Ibid. See also Martin H. Cressey, “Reformed/Presbyterian Churches” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 967.

¹⁴ Vischer, “The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets” in Bauswein and Vischer (Eds), *The Reformed Family Worldwide*, 1. Vischer describes various stages in the history of the Reformed churches: The first stage involved “the struggle to introduce the new order of the Reformation: to give room to the demands of the Word of God; to replace the celebration of the mass with regular preaching and the common celebration of the Lord’s Supper; to simplify the spiritual life and the activities of the church, and so on” (8). This included, *inter alia*, the first Reformed confessions out of the need “to explain and to defend the Reformation both to the population and to the outside world, in particular to the authorities of the Empire”, in order to show “that the Reformation corresponded to the true Tradition over against the deviations in the medieval church” (Ibid.). Thereafter, another stage emerged in the mid-sixteenth-century in response to the need “to give a coherent account of the Christian faith as it was taught by the Reformed churches” (Ibid.). Several summaries of faith were penned to serve as both “the source and the criterion of the correct teaching of the church” (Ibid.). Hereafter, the rise of a Reformed Orthodoxy emerged, in the light of how Calvin’s teaching had developed a distinctive and systematic character in contrast to Luther and other Reformers, with Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536 as the obvious case in point. Following Calvin’s death, “Reformed doctrine took a more definite form” (Ibid., 9) as it was increasingly “organised into a coherent system” (Ibid.). Since then, numerous controversies and questions down the theological ages have enriched the original impulse of Reformed churches through new experiences, movements, horizons, and insights. In this regard, Dempsey describes Reformed churches as broadly as possible: “The Reformed family is not a single church but rather a family of Reformed churches that are historically and theologically related to the sixteenth-century Genevan reformation, whose principal teacher was the French theologian John Calvin.” See Jane Dempsey Douglass, “A Reformed Perspective on the Ecumenical Movement”, 2. See also Cressey, “Reformed/Presbyterian Churches” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 966-968.

¹⁵ See John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 14. Cited in Ross Mackenzie, “Authority in the Reformed Tradition” in Peter J. McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 94. Cf. James Torrance, “Interpreting the Word by the Light of Christ or the Light of Nature? Calvin, Calvinism, and Barth” in Robert V. Schnucker (Ed.), *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, Vol. X, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 255ff.

Christ, has been always and everywhere directed by the one Spirit of Christ, what comes of the Word of the Lord, that clearest of all marks?”¹⁶

In this regard, the real reason for the Reformation according to Calvin was to protest against the manner in which the Word of God had been veiled or subverted in the practice of the Roman Catholic Church, especially vis-à-vis the doctrine and praxis of the papal office. The ethos of the Reformed tradition since Calvin revolves primarily around the authority of the Word of God principle, which is characterised by a pre-eminent and reforming quality and role in the life and affairs of the churches. For, as Martin H. Cressey notes, these churches have been “convinced that a reformed church is ... *semper reformanda* (always to be reformed) in accordance with the divine purpose.”¹⁷ An assessment of Reformed perspectives on the Petrine office necessitates, therefore, a critical exploration of the extent to which the nature and role of the papal office coincides with and supports this Reformed qualitative distinctive.

5.3. REFORMED – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

According to Vischer, “the Reformed tradition has been characterised by two competing movements – on the one hand an effort to maintain bonds of unity and on the other a trend toward fragmentation.”¹⁸ The Reformed narrative has undoubtedly yielded a story of the church tradition unable “to maintain communion in face of new challenges to interpret the Gospel”,¹⁹ where its “divided churches are monuments to the controversies and struggles of the past.”²⁰ This notwithstanding, recent decades attest to a renewed commitment on the part of the Reformed churches to deeper communion with other churches, especially with that of Roman Catholicism. As Craig R. Higgins asserts, “Any Reformed ecclesiology must begin with the confession that there is but one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. This is

¹⁶ See Mackenzie, “Authority in the Reformed Tradition” in McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians?*, 95.

¹⁷ Cressey, “Reformed/Presbyterian Churches” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 966.

¹⁸ Vischer, “The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets” in Bauswein and Vischer (Eds), *The Reformed Family Worldwide*, 1.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

an article of the Faith – a theological first principle. In the ultimate sense, the unity of the Church is inviolable.”²¹

Among the Reformed tradition’s distinctive traits in this ecumenical realm, is its theological bias toward ‘life and work’ issues (as opposed to ‘faith and order’ matters). In this regard, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) has continually and consistently focussed its attention on such topics as injustice and poverty.²² Moreover, as far as ecumenical dialogues are concerned, including those with Roman Catholicism, “there are strong voices among some of its leaders raising serious questions about the traditional approach of these dialogues, e.g. that of seeking resolution of doctrinal questions over which Christians separated in the 16th century.”²³ Notwithstanding such prevailing reservations, Reformed representatives in the dialogues with Rome on the Petrine ministry would need to reflect a critical and propitious connection between discussions on the papacy and the practical harsh realities of life faced by their members and society at large.

5.3.1. A Brief Overview

Official ecumenical conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed churches commenced in 1968 through the Vatican’s SPCU and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. As Frederick Bliss points out, the birth of such a dialogue faced reluctance and delays “largely because of what was believed to be fundamental divergences between Catholic and Reformed doctrines on the nature of the church and its relationship with God and with the world.”²⁴ Moreover, “The aim of the Roman Catholic-Reformed Joint Study Commission ... is not full visible union.”²⁵ Instead, it has been primarily concerned with “finding common ground,

²¹ Craig R. Higgins, “Plausible Ecumenism: A Reformed Perspective” in *Touchstone Magazine* (January/February 2000), at www.touchstonemag.com/docs/issues/13.1docs/13-1pg34.html. Accessed 12/01/2004. This ecumenical ideal, he argues, should rightly be seen as a first-order priority. This ideal notwithstanding, Higgins concedes to the experiential contradiction in Reformed faith.

²² See some remarks on WARC’s priorities in “Relations with Reformed Christians”, *Information Service* No. 109 (2002/I-II), 60.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 124.

²⁵ Ibid.

clarifying differences, and seeking ways of working together to give common witness.”²⁶

The first series of international consultations between these two churches occurred during the period 1970-1977 on the subject of “The Presence of Christ in Church and World”,²⁷ in which they addressed the place and role of the church in relation to God and the world. Motivated by the broader perspective of how the discussions “would advance their common concern to manifest the relevance of Christ in the world,”²⁸ the task in this first round of discussions was “to locate the present convergences, continuing tensions, and open questions which emerged from the process”.²⁹

Their second series took place during the period 1984-1990, after a seven-year pause, and was titled “Towards a Common Understanding of the Church”.³⁰ Its purpose was “to deepen mutual understanding and to foster the eventual reconciliation of our two communities”.³¹ The earlier dialogue was acknowledged for its contribution to discovering common ground but left open “questions pertaining to such matters as authority, order, and church discipline.”³² The second phase therefore “concentrated more directly on the doctrine of the church”³³ and was lauded for its theological maturity and cohesiveness.³⁴ Aware of their common ties, they hoped that these results would encourage further steps toward common testimony and joint ecumenical action.³⁵ Moreover, they looked forward to sharing

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See “The Presence of Christ in Church and World. Final Report of the Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, 1977” in Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (Geneva: WCC, 1984), 434-463. Hereafter referred to as FR 1977.

²⁸ Ibid., §4.

²⁹ Ibid., §9.

³⁰ See “Towards a Common Understanding of the Church. Second Phase, 1984-1990” in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 780-818. Hereafter referred to as FR 1990.

³¹ Ibid., §1.

³² Ibid., §2.

³³ Ibid., §3.

³⁴ See Alain Blancy, “Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 970.

³⁵ FR 1990, §3.

the experience of fellowship and seeking fuller communion in truth and love for the sake of their common service of Jesus Christ in the world.³⁶

A third series of conversations has since 1998, following an eight-year gap, been conducted under the title, “Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God”, with the intention of “finding further common ground in ecclesiology and further motivation for common witness.”³⁷

The following section studies the reports of the phases one and two for their relevancy regarding the papal office as problem and promise. Direct references to the papal institution are identified and analysed for the purpose of ascertaining how Reformed leaders, in dialogue with their Roman Catholic counterparts, are talking about the Petrine office in recent decades. Several concluding observations are offered out of this cursory analysis in order to assess the present and future state of affairs concerning the papacy in Roman Catholic-Reformed discourse.

5.3.2. Final Report, 1970-1977

5.3.2.1. Concerning papal infallibility

The Report, in a section on the teaching authority of the church,³⁸ highlights the problematic doctrine of infallibility for the Reformed tradition, whether applied to the church or to the pope as held by Roman Catholics.³⁹ While both churches affirm together that “God remains faithful to his covenant and, despite the weaknesses and errors of Christians, he makes his Word heard in the Church”,⁴⁰ the Reformed churches are at serious odds with any infallibility accorded to human agents, which they maintain as deriving “from a repugnance to bind God and the Church in this way, in view of the sovereignty of Christ over the Church and of the liberty of the

³⁶ Ibid., §4.

³⁷ John A. Radano, “Reformed-Catholic Relations” in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002. Articles by Members of the Staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Vatican City* (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 37. For further details, see also “Relations with Reformed Christians”, *Information Service*, 59-61.

³⁸ FR 1977, cf. §§24-42.

³⁹ Ibid., §39; see especially §41 for a synopsis of the Roman Catholic understanding and motivation of the infallibility doctrine.

⁴⁰ Ibid., §40.

Spirit, a repugnance strengthened by the experience of frequent errors and resistances to the Word on the part of the Church.”⁴¹

As such, “for Reformed sensibility, any claim to infallibility in the modern world represents an obstacle to the credibility of the proclamation”,⁴² since “what alone is infallible, properly speaking, is God’s fidelity to his covenant, whereby he corrects and preserves his Church by the Spirit until the consummation of his reign.”⁴³ On these grounds, therefore, the notion of papal infallibility is anathema in the Reformed theological understanding of God and the church.

5.3.2.2. Concerning the decisive role of the Bishop of Rome towards catholicity

The Report, in a section on ministry, enquires: “In how far does the institutional connection with the office of Peter and the office of bishop belong to the regularly appointed ministry in the Church?”⁴⁴ This question raises the broader matter of the church’s catholicity, at which point the Roman Catholics acknowledge that “connection with the Bishop of Rome plays a decisive role in the experience of Catholicity”,⁴⁵ as opposed to the Reformed tradition in which “catholicity is most immediately experienced through membership in the individual community.”⁴⁶ In this way, then, the participants draw attention to at least two points: Firstly, there is the Roman Catholic notion that the Bishop of Rome fulfills a crucial responsibility in catholicity. Secondly, there is, for the Reformed, the problematic claim that this role of the Bishop of Rome is to be considered decisive for catholicity.

5.3.3. Final Report, 1984-1990

5.3.3.1. Concerning the historical controversy of the universal authority of the pope

⁴¹ Ibid., §42.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., §107.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The Report refers back to those ecclesiological concerns that featured pre-eminently in the thinking and actions of the Reformers, which ultimately led them to take issue with various aspects in the sixteenth-century church.⁴⁷ Given their reservations around the controversies of the excessive authority of the church and its hierarchy, they were led “to question the value of episcopal succession as an expression of the continuity of the church in the apostolic truth through the centuries”,⁴⁸ which caused them to reject such teachings as the universal authority of the pope.⁴⁹ In this way, then, the participants highlight the matter of universal papal authority as a fundamental historical controversy resting behind the earliest division between the two churches, given that the Reformers contended for the church’s reform and the need “to depart from ecclesiastical teachings, institutions and practices which were held to have distorted the message of the gospel and obscured the proper nature and calling of the church.”⁵⁰

5.3.3.2. Concerning Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II and the new ecumenical atmosphere and commitment

The Report is cognisant of the hostility and bitterness that characterised Roman Catholic-Reformed relations throughout the past four-and-a-half centuries, but underlines the seminal role that the pontificate of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council fulfilled in contributing towards the development of “a genuinely new atmosphere ... between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic churches.”⁵¹ In this way, then, the participants draw attention to the positive impact of the pope in helping “to break down misunderstandings and caricatures of the present-day reality of the Roman Catholic Church.”⁵²

The participants proceed beyond Vatican II to highlight how this ecumenical atmosphere has given way to various ecumenical commitments between the churches.⁵³ In addition to their joint efforts in prayer, theological dialogue, Bible

⁴⁷ FR 1990, §§17ff.

⁴⁸ Ibid., §20.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., §18.

⁵¹ Ibid., §29.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., §§60ff.

translation, and involvement in various social-economic-political projects, the formal conversations at the international level between the WARC and the PCPCU are of particular significance, which Pope John Paul II specifically recognised in a 1982 letter to the WARC president, in which he noted: “The way upon which we have embarked together is without return, we can only move forward, that is why we strive to manifest unity more perfectly and more visibly, just as God wants it for all those who believe in him.”⁵⁴

In this same spirit, Pope John Paul II has publicly praised such figures as Calvin and Zwingli for their gospel concern for reform. While in Switzerland in 1984, the pope stated:

The legacy of the thought and ethical convictions particular to each of these two men continues to be forcefully and dynamically present in various parts of Christianity. On the one hand, we cannot forget that the work of their reform remains a permanent challenge among us and makes our ecclesiastical division always present, but on the other hand, no one can deny that elements of the theology and spirituality of each of them maintain deep ties between us.⁵⁵

In these ways, then, the participants reveal a positive image of the pope in contributing towards new ecumenical relations between the churches, who is intimately concerned with reform in the church,⁵⁶ and who acknowledges the profound role of the Reformers such as Calvin in underlining the ministry of the reforming Word.

5.3.3.3. Concerning church and papal reform

The Report points out that reform was indeed part and parcel of Roman Catholicism around the Reformation era from the Council of Trent and following.⁵⁷ The Roman Catholics admit: “Especially denounced at that time were the venality and political and military involvements of some of the popes and members of the curia; ... the

⁵⁴ Ibid., §60.

⁵⁵ Ibid., §61.

⁵⁶ See especially the following discussion of how reform was part of the Roman Catholic programme through the Council of Trent, with special regard for the office of the papal institution: Ibid., §§40-48.

⁵⁷ Ibid., §§33ff.

often scandalous lives of clergy, including bishops and certain popes;”⁵⁸ and so on. They refer to Pope Adrian VI (1522-1523) who reflected a particular urgency to deal with reform in the Vatican.⁵⁹

In the light of this awareness and attempts, the participants note that “The very vehemence with which its abuses were denounced in some sectors of the church and society indicates, moreover, a deepened religious sensitivity”,⁶⁰ and then insightfully assert: “In such a perspective the great leaders of both the Reformation and the Catholic Reform must be seen as products of the concerns of the age into which they were born and, to that extent, in continuity with those concerns and, indeed, with each other.”⁶¹ Since the leaders and churches were not in good standing with the other throughout the centuries, their demands and proposals were often misunderstood, trivialised, and repudiated.⁶²

5.3.3.4. Concerning the primacy of the Bishop of Rome in relation to the Reformers’ church order proposals

The Report gives an account of those theological assumptions broadly in the minds of Roman Catholics during the Reformation era, which featured as theological ammunition against the Reformation itself.⁶³ In this regard, they refer to the following Roman Catholic assumption: “Christ founded the church, establishing it on the apostles, who are the basis of the episcopal order of ministry and authority in the church. In this order the bishop of Rome had more than primacy of honour, though the precise nature, extent and function of this primacy was much debated.”⁶⁴ This assumption, therefore, paved the way for the conclusion that “the proposals of the Reformers concerning church order appeared to be an attack on the apostolic

⁵⁸ Ibid., §34.

⁵⁹ Ibid., §35.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., §37. In this regard, the participants, as a case in point, state: “...the centrality and dramatically evangelical nature of the issue of justification for the Reformers was not grasped. Very few Catholics really understood that for the Reformers what was at stake was not simply this or that doctrine, practice or institution but the very gospel itself. Thus, for Catholics ‘reform’ continued to be conceived in pre-Reformation terms as addressing disciplinary and pastoral issues in their established form. They understood their engagement with the Reformation as refuting its ‘doctrinal errors’.”

⁶³ Ibid., §39.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

foundation of the church.”⁶⁵ In this way, then, the participants draw attention to how deeply embedded the doctrine of papal primacy – which was more than a mere primacy of honour – was located within medieval Roman Catholic ecclesiology and polity.

5.3.3.5. Concerning papal centrism and organic church unity

The Report refers to the doctrine of the papal office as a distinguishing feature of Roman Catholicism that set it apart from other movements in order to refute their ecclesiological claims.⁶⁶ The diversity of Protestant movements was contrasted with Roman Catholicism, whose members “were united in one, visible church under the pope”.⁶⁷ According to the participants, this “one-sided argumentation”⁶⁸ characterising Roman Catholic theologians between Trent and Vatican II “was apologetically successful ... at least in assuring Roman Catholics that theirs was the one and only true church of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹ In fact, “post-Tridentine apologetics capitalised on the divisiveness within Protestantism in contrast to the organic unity of Roman Catholicism.”⁷⁰ This resulted in post-Tridentine Catholicism becoming “ever more juridical in its approach to a wide range of issues and ecclesiology increasingly institution-oriented and papally centred.”⁷¹ Papal centrism was eventually absolutised at the First Vatican Council through the doctrine of papal infallibility.⁷²

In these ways, then, the participants draw attention to the intimate relation between the papal office and organic church unity, whether in the light of negative or positive

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., §48. See especially §56, as a noteworthy case in point: “Roman Catholic negativity towards the Reformed churches had a number of intertwined bases. On the ecclesiastical level, the most obvious focus of attention was the Reformed rejection of the episcopacy and the papacy that was also sometimes expressed in terms that Roman Catholics found extremely offensive.”

⁶⁷ Ibid., §48.

⁶⁸ Ibid., §49.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., §§50-51. The participants refer to the contextual dynamics affecting the Vatican I teaching on the “primacy and infallible teaching authority of the Roman pontiff” (§50). They also point out that “the teaching of the First Vatican Council ... is much more nuanced than either its ultramontane proponents or its antipapal opponents seem to have realised. For example, Vatican I did not teach that ‘the pope is infallible’, as is popularly imagined. Rather it taught that the pope can, under carefully specified and limited circumstances, officially exercise the infallibility divinely given to the church as a whole, in order to decide questions of faith and morals for the universal church” (§51).

motivational forces. Owing to the negative factors in the development of the papal formula, however, the participants underline how the doctrine of the papacy became increasingly encased in a 'pyramidal' ecclesiological framework that paved the way for longstanding controversy and divergence for other churches, especially for the Reformed tradition.

5.3.3.6. Concerning the primacy of the pope within an ecclesiology of communion

The Report takes cognisance of the impact of the Second Vatican Council and the ecumenical movement on the twentieth-century Roman Catholic Church.⁷³ In this regard, the participants highlight that the principles of collegiality and communality have become part of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, which they refer to as an "ecclesiology of communion".⁷⁴ Within this new framework, the participants refer to the issue of papal primacy, which is recognised as being in need of reform.⁷⁵ In this way, then, the participants draw attention to the new ecclesiological paradigm for contemporary explorations of the doctrine of the papacy and its accompanying claims.

5.3.3.7. Concerning the role and authority of the Bishop of Rome for universal communion

The Report notes that at the heart of the ministry for Roman Catholics, is the bishop, whose role involves the development of "a life of harmony within the community",⁷⁶ as well as representing "his church before other local churches in the bosom of the universal communion."⁷⁷ In this regard, the Bishop of Rome fulfills a central role in partnership with the bishops of the church: "Charged to maintain and deepen the communion of all the churches among themselves, the bishops, with the bishop of Rome who presides over the universal communion, form a 'college'",⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid., §§52ff.

⁷⁴ Ibid., §52.

⁷⁵ Ibid. See also §53.

⁷⁶ Ibid., §142.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

which “is seen as the continuation of the ‘college’ of the apostles, among whom Peter was the first.”⁷⁹

Proceeding, they assert: “The bishop of Rome, understood as the successor of Peter, is the prime member of this college and has the authority necessary for the fulfillment of his service on behalf of the unity of the whole church in apostolic faith and life.”⁸⁰ In these ways, the participants draw attention to the distinctive doctrine of the Bishop of Rome within Roman Catholic ecclesiology and polity, though emphasising the critical values of collegiality and authority as ‘two sides of the same coin’.

5.3.3.8. Concerning Pope John Paul II and reconciliation of memories

The Report focusses on the need for both churches to take cognisance of each other’s separated histories and memories, and to move to a reconciliation of memories, as they state: “Shared memories, even if painful, may in time become a basis for new mutual bonding and a growing sense of shared identity.”⁸¹ In this regard, the participants refer to the efforts and remarks of Pope John Paul II on this front, who asserted: “Coming to terms with these memories is one of the main elements of the ecumenical process. It leads to frank recognition of mutual injury and errors in the way the two communities reacted to each other, even though it was the intention of all concerned to bring the church more into line with the will of the Lord.”⁸² In this way, then, the participants note the special concern and commitment of the pope for interpreting the motivations and legacy of the Reformers, especially that of Calvin.⁸³

5.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE REFORMED – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. See also §144, where the participants identify the question of Peter’s significance in the New Testament, along with the way in which this role came to be interpreted in the early church, as questions deserving attention in future discussions.

⁸¹ Ibid., §153.

⁸² Cf. Ibid., §154.

⁸³ Cf. Ibid., §§154-156.

Some observations are now offered concerning the problem and promise of the Petrine ministry in reference to the Reformed bias of the reforming Word of God principle, with special consideration given to those signs of stuckness and hope that demand renewed and serious attention for furthering the conversation between Roman Catholics and Reformed believers. Ecclesiological concerns and opportunities lie at the core of these problematic and propitious aspects of their relationship, as noted by Leo J. Koffeman: “Ecclesiology has been the focal point of most of these dialogues, due to a growing awareness that, at least in the present situation, contrasting views with regard to the Church are the main stumbling block in ecumenical practice and theology.”⁸⁴

Moreover, as Koffeman explains, “In a more historical perspective, the Reformation movement – both within and outside the Roman Catholic Church – not only focussed on doctrine, but had a strong impact on church structure and organisation as well.”⁸⁵ This coincides, too, with Vischer’s observation that Reformed churches traditionally repudiated the papacy on the basis of their understanding of the church, which was informed in no small measure by Calvin’s ecclesiology.⁸⁶

5.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

The preceding overview of Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogue texts reveals that Roman Catholics and Reformed Christians encounter a reasonable measure of theological overlap as well as discontinuity vis-à-vis the Petrine office in the light of a Reformed perspective on the church and its structures, while keeping the ministry of the reforming Word uppermost. The survey reflects a number of issues about the

⁸⁴ Leo J. Koffeman, “Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, Two Complementary Traditions?” in P.N. Holtrop, F. de Lange, R. Roukema (Eds), *Passion of Protestants* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 2004), 51. For an insightful overview of Reformed ecclesiology, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 50-58. Cf. Walter Cardinal Kasper, “Reactions of Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Paper ‘The Successor to Peter’”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, §5, 106.

⁸⁵ Koffeman, “Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, Two Complementary Traditions?” in Holtrop et al (Eds), *Passion of Protestants*, 51.

⁸⁶ Vischer explains: “Calvin understands the Church as a communion called into existence by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments according to Jesus’ instruction. For the stream of the Spirit to flow abundantly, the fountain providing the living waters must be freed from all obstacles.” For Calvin, the papacy represented such an obstacle in the church. See Vischer, “The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 139.

papal office that perpetuates its problematic character and reception among Reformed churches. These include the claims of papal infallibility and papal centrism, but also the nature of papal authority, the scandalous track-record of some popes in earlier times, and the question of papal primacy as transcending mere honour. What is increasingly discernible, as Anna Case-Winters and Lewis Mudge point out, is how the Reformed churches' "attitudes toward the institution of the papacy are historically embedded in [their] understanding of ecclesiastical authority."⁸⁷

5.4.1.1. *The problem of a formalistic ecclesiology*

Reformed churches are critical of what could be termed a formalistic ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism, in which the doctrine of the papal office continues to be strongly encased and rigidly maintained. Commenting on the ecclesiological emphases of the second round of Roman Catholic-Reformed discussions, Alain Blancy concludes: "Difficulties reside largely in different understandings of the relationship between what is confessed concerning the church and the concrete forms of its historical existence."⁸⁸ In this way, Blancy draws attention to the pivotal nature of form in the ecclesiological frameworks of these two communions. While Reformed churches are cognisant of the reality and importance of form as applied to church ministry and its structures, they find the status of form within Roman Catholicism extremely problematic, especially in reference to the institutional character and outworking of the papacy.

One reservation concerns how the longstanding issue of ecclesiality remains out of reach for Reformed (and other) churches on formalistic grounds, i.e. on the basis that these non-Roman Catholic churches do not embrace the Roman Catholic form of ministry, which serves as an apt case in point of how ecumenically scandalous the papal office continues to be at present. Communion with the Roman Catholic Church through, and only through, communion with the Roman see, is repudiated by Reformed ecclesiology, which would identify the church's ecclesiality, *inter alia*,

⁸⁷ Anna Case-Winters and Lewis Mudge, "The Successor to Peter" in *Journal of Presbyterian History: Studies in Reformed History and Culture*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Summer 2002), 86.

⁸⁸ Blancy, "Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue" in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 970.

with reference to the faithful administration and reforming work of the Word in the faith and life of the church.⁸⁹ Moreover, in fact, Reformed believers continue to question the biblical warrant for the papal institution in the form in which it presently exists.

In this regard, a second reservation rests with how the specific form of episcopacy has challenged Roman Catholics and Reformed churches.⁹⁰ Case-Winters and Mudge acknowledge that “for much of our history episcopacy has been associated in our minds with ecclesiastical establishment and sacral monarchy.”⁹¹ In no small measure, such an “antipathy to episcopacy”⁹² remains in the Reformed ethos, even though others in the wider Reformed family have entertained and lived a different history.⁹³

Reformed churches hold rather to a primacy and authority of the Word of God, as opposed to the status attributed to a specific historical form of office.⁹⁴ For this reason, they bear an appreciation for apostolic succession as applied to faithfulness in the practice of God’s revealed and reforming Word, but reflect serious reservations about limiting apostolic succession to episcopacy.⁹⁵ This understanding rests, *inter alia*, upon the fact that Calvin and the other Reformers “placed strong emphasis on Christ’s presence in the local community”,⁹⁶ leading to the affirmation that “God’s gifts do not require mediation by a hierarchical order”⁹⁷ since “Christ is present wherever God’s Word is proclaimed and the sacraments administered.”⁹⁸

⁸⁹ Cf. Stuart Loudon, *The True Face of the Kirk* (London: Oxford University, 1963), 12; Mackenzie, “Authority in the Reformed Tradition” in McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians?*, 95ff passim; Case-Winters and Mudge, “The Successor to Peter”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 88-89. It is necessary to note that Reformed thinkers have indeed been tempted at different times toward labelling their particular church polity as *iure divino*, as the only form permitted by Scripture, but most have regarded it better as finding agreement with the Word of God.

⁹⁰ See, for example, David N. Power, “Episcopacy” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 400-403, esp. 401.

⁹¹ Case-Winters and Mudge, “The Successor to Peter”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 89.

⁹² Ibid. See, however, Adrian Helleman’s remarks on episcopacy in the Reformed tradition, especially his comments on Calvin’s practice of “a functional episcopacy in Geneva”. Adrian Helleman, “The Contribution of John Calvin to an Ecumenical Dialogue on Papal Primacy” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (1994), 340.

⁹³ See Case-Winters and Mudge, “The Successor to Peter”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 89.

⁹⁴ See especially Van der Borcht, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 484-485.

⁹⁵ See Ibid., 489-491.

⁹⁶ Vischer, “The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets” in Bauswein and Vischer (Eds), *The Reformed Family Worldwide*, 30.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

A third major reservation concerns how the cultural face and form of the papacy perpetuates the ecumenical distance between Roman Catholics and Reformed believers. The pope, as all the churches know, is stereotypically associated with a Roman (geographical form), Italian (conversational form), male (gender form), and jurisdictional (relational form) face. This cultural garb of the Petrine office, which is substantiated and preserved on biblical and ecclesiological grounds, does not contribute to overcoming the ecumenical impasse around the papal question.⁹⁹ Reformed ecclesiology would not restrict an office of ministry to a particular form of culture, language, gender, symbolism, or operational framework. Moreover, it would find great offence with such limitations imposed on or reflected in church structures of ministry.

5.4.1.2. *The problem of an individualistic ecclesiology*

Reformed churches find much difficulty in accepting what could be termed an individualistic ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism, in which imbalanced emphases are applied to the offices of ministry,¹⁰⁰ especially in respect of the papal office. As Vischer points out, “Reformed churches have generally a deep, sometimes even an excessive, mistrust of all forms of personal authority.”¹⁰¹ “Again and again,” he underlines, “Reformed statements of faith emphasise that there is no hierarchical order in the Church but that all ministries are of equal importance. Again and again they maintain that no congregation has more rights than any other.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ In a helpful and insightful manner, Patrick Granfield identifies several key factors that count against the papacy as it has and continues to exist. Those objections that relate to the form or face of the papacy include the following, at least. Firstly, the papacy is anachronistic: it is out of place in the modern era, is incapable of effectively dealing with contemporary matters, is culturally estranged from the present world, and employs outmoded theological and administrative concepts and frameworks. Secondly, the papacy is too Italian: it is ecumenically out of place because it is symbolically as well as operationally so Latin, Italian and Western. See Patrick Granfield, *The Papacy in Transition* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981), 17-33.

¹⁰⁰ For an insightful discussion concerning this tension between balance and imbalance within the church, especially from a Reformed perspective, see Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), passim.

¹⁰¹ Vischer, “The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 139-140.

¹⁰² Ibid., 140. Adrian Helleman explains: “In the Church there are different responsibilities, each with its corresponding authority. To state the obvious: in Reformed polity a deacon is not an elder and an elder is not a pastor. But because each office receives its authority directly from Christ, none may lord it over the other, although this certainly does not mean that one minister cannot preside over others. Authority belongs to the ministry and it never becomes the personal property of the holder of the

The Bishop of Rome, as well as other participants in the hierarchy of leadership, are criticised for the overemphasis on their roles at the expense of the vital roles carried out by those on the lower rungs of the ministerial ladder.¹⁰³ Such disparity arguably paves the way for an exclusivist character and function of leadership, which places too much distance and isolation between the pope and the laity, but also readies the papal office for potential authoritarianism, disputable claims of infallibility and jurisdiction, and similar problems for the Reformed and broader ecumenical community.¹⁰⁴

According to Craig R. Higgins in his identification of various primary ecclesiological strands in his Reformed tradition, “the conviction that the Church is to be governed in a *conciliar* fashion, with governing councils existing on local, regional, national, and (sometimes) international levels”,¹⁰⁵ is indeed a central facet of Reformed ecclesiology. Furthermore, Higgins contends, “Reformed ecclesiology has also

office, even though it is exercised by persons. Thus equality is not demanded, but each office must respect the authority of the other offices.” Helleman, “The Contribution of John Calvin to an Ecumenical Dialogue on Papal Primacy”, *One in Christ*, 337.

¹⁰³ See Van der Borcht, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 492-496.

¹⁰⁴ See Ibid., 159-161. In his telling discussion of the ministerial office in the thinking and teaching of John Calvin, Van der Borcht refers to the grounding and history of the primacy of the pope as treated in Calvin's *Institutes* (IV, VI and VII). He highlights some of Calvin's primary reservations of the Roman Catholic substantiation and theological position on the papacy. In the first place, there is the issue of how Calvin reads Scripture and his understanding of Christ's intention: “Op de eerste plaats weerlegt Calvijn de interpretatie van bijbelgedeelten die door de roomse theologen worden aangevoerd om te bewijzen dat deze bisschopszetel in waardigheid en macht boven de anderen uitsteekt. Daartegenover stelt hij zijn eigen lezing van de Schrift. Christus zelf is het blijvende hoofd van zijn gemeente. Hij heeft niemand in zijn plaats aangesteld als plaatsvervanger (*vicarius*)” (159). In the second place, there is the issue of Christ's authority, given for the sake of the church's unity: “Verder is de sleutelmacht niet alleen aan Petrus gegeven, maar aan alle apostelen. De aparte plaats die Petrus inneemt, dient niet om hem boven de anderen te stellen, maar is gegeven met het oog op de aanbeveling van de eenheid van de kerk” (159-160). Moreover, “Calvijn heeft er geen moeite mee te erkennen dat Petrus in de Schrift de eer van de eerste plaats toe komt, maar de Schrift verbindt hier nergens volmacht (*potestas*) aan. Christus zelf blijft tegenwoordig door het diensambt van mensen, die gesteld zijn om de kerk te regeren” (160). For Calvin, the grounding of papal primacy is flawed: “nergens is sprake van een primaat van de kerk van Rome of van een hoogste macht” (160). Van der Borcht then shows how this ecclesologically-flawed point of departure paved the way for a papal history papered with controversy, scandal, and division, so much so that Calvin eventually employed radical terminology, such as ‘the antichrist’, to refer to the nature of the pope. Given this background, Van der Borcht argues: “Calvijn verwierpt het pausdom, omdat de pausen hun taak niet opnemen als herders die hun kudde weiden met Woord, sacrament en tuchtuitoefening. ...Zij hebben zichzelf uitgeroepen tot hoofd van de kerk en verwisselden de collegiale ambtsuitoefening voor een tiranieke alleenheerschappij. Het resultaat is dat zij zo vervreemd zijn van het gelovige volk, dat zij niet langer in staat zijn om namens hen te spreken” (160-161). See also Vischer, “The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 140-141.

¹⁰⁵ Higgins, “Plausible Ecumenism”, *Touchstone Magazine*.

stressed the ‘parity of the ministry,’ teaching that all those ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament share the same sacramental office. Yet we also recognise, within the one order of ministry, many roles of commissioning and authority.”¹⁰⁶

Reformed churches, given these methodological assumptions, fulfill a more corporate or collective type of episcopate that is directed at a more pastoral episcopacy,¹⁰⁷ which inevitably imposes impediments on the way of the Petrine dialogue. While recognising other forms of church government as potentially legitimate, their suspicion or caution regarding a less-collective approach is substantiated in large measure in reference to “the seriousness of the human condition with respect to sin and evil.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the responsibility of the individual leader or representative, such as the pope, would be “embedded in the shared responsibility of an elected representative college”¹⁰⁹ in the Reformed tradition.

5.4.1.3. The problem of a conservative ecclesiology

Reformed churches experience ecclesiological difficulty with Roman Catholicism concerning the tension between stability and change or maintenance and reform. It is noteworthy that the origins of their embittered relationship lie in this same tension, where Reformed churches were born as part of their concern for church renewal in conformity with the Word of God, and in the face of the Roman church’s rejection of such a campaign for reform.¹¹⁰ More specifically, the papal office is

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. This understanding is reinforced by Martin H. Cressey in his discussion of the polity of Reformed/Presbyterian churches, as he succinctly asserts: “The polities of the Reformed churches were consciously developed to enable a return to what was held to be the discipleship of the early church”, of which the main features were “the parity of ministers, the participation of all members in church government and the authority of councils.” See Cressey, “Reformed/Presbyterian Churches” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 967.

¹⁰⁷ See Higgins, “Plausible Ecumenism”, *Touchstone Magazine*, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Case-Winters and Mudge, “The Successor to Peter”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 88. They elaborate: “The conviction that our condition is fallen, fallible and fragile has caused us to place limitations on the power and position to be accorded to any individual in matters of doctrine or practice. We have therefore tended to lodge authority in corporate or conciliar bodies of duly elected persons.”

¹⁰⁹ Vischer, “The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 141.

¹¹⁰ See also (and again), Vischer, “The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets” in Bauswein and Vischer (Eds), *The Reformed Family Worldwide*, 1-2.

repudiated at present for an array of problematic aspects that are conserved and maintained, rather than confronted and transformed.

In their critical remarks on the reception of tradition, Case-Winters and Mudge underline the reformational ecclesiology within the Reformed tradition, as they assert: “In general, we assume that tradition is a living, growing, human thing: dynamic, not static. It cannot simply be passed on unchanged, like a family heirloom. Consistent with our conviction of human fallibility is our recognition of many false starts and wrong turns along the way.”¹¹¹ In this way, they highlight the dynamic character of the Reformed tradition vis-à-vis matters ecclesiological; at the same time, these remarks serve as a critique of the papacy with its historical teachings and practices.

Proceeding further, they concede that in both communions, “There are times when we confuse local customs, parochialisms, or special interests with what is central to the tradition.”¹¹² This should challenge the churches and their structures of ministry with the authority of the Word of God to responsibly reform all that the church is and does, as they remark: “Careful and faithful ‘passing on’ requires open, self-critical, reflection. Tradition lives by the continuing reconstruction of its symbolic world as we seek to clarify historically given meanings in ever-changing circumstances.”¹¹³ Applied to the papal institution, Case-Winters and Mudge draw attention to what Reformed churches may see as a static or conservative ecclesiology and office, which demands urgent consideration as to its much-needed programme toward dynamic reform.

5.4.2. Signs of Hope

The analysis of the dialogue texts also discloses evidence that Reformed churches are progressively finding a measure of ecclesiological convergence on the Petrine ministry and cognate aspects. Serious concerns notwithstanding, current relations

¹¹¹ Case-Winters and Mudge, “The Successor to Peter”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 87-88.

¹¹² Ibid., 88.

¹¹³ Ibid.

between Reformed and Roman Catholic representatives are yielding significant areas of agreement and activities of cooperation.¹¹⁴

Reformed churches affirm the potential legitimacy of a Petrine function of unity; that such popes as Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II have fulfilled a profoundly pastoral and ecumenical role for both churches; that such Reformers as Zwingli and Calvin have received renewed consideration by Roman Catholics as praiseworthy figures; that recent popes have been earnestly concerned with reform in the church; that various issues of contention between the churches, including around the issue of the papal office, have presently been explored as past misunderstandings; that the primacy of the pope may at least be embraced as a primacy of honour; that the doctrine of the papacy is being explored anew by Roman Catholics within an ecclesiology of communion; that Pope John Paul II has made an important contribution toward ecclesial reconciliation; and so on.

Other strategic points of ecumenical entry are embedded within the dialogue texts of the two churches, which could potentially assist either communion to further the Petrine dialogue.¹¹⁵ The following areas deserve engagement and attention for their prospective ecumenical import.¹¹⁶

5.4.2.1. On the diversity and fallibility of church forms

¹¹⁴ See, for example, the following: John Norton, "Pope meets with, reassures Reformed leaders on ecumenism", *Presbyterian News Service* (21 September 2000), at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/oldnews/2000/00333.htm. Accessed 10/09/2004; Stephen Brown, "Reformed-Catholic dialogue provides glimmer of hope after 'Dominus Iesus'", *Presbyterian News Service* (17 October 2000), at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/oldnews/2000/003. Accessed 10/09/2004; Jerry L. Van Marter, "Visitors from the Vatican bring message of hope for greater unity between Catholics, Presbyterians", *Presbyterian News Service* (8 December 2000), at www.wfn.org/2000/12/msg00072.html. Accessed 09/09/2003; "Catholics and U.S. Presbyterians Move Closer", *Daily Catholic 2001* (2 April 2001), at dailycatholic.org/issue/2001Apr/apr2nu1.htm. Accessed 10/09/2004; John M. Buchanan, "Conversations in Rome – Presbyterian dialogue with the Catholic Church", *The Christian Century* (2 May 2001), at www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_14_118/ai_74439256. Accessed 10/09/2004; Jerry L. Van Marter, "Presbyterians Travel to the Vatican in Search of Unity with Roman Catholics", *PCUSA News* (2002), at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/oldnews/2001/01106.htm. Accessed 10/09/2004.

¹¹⁵ According to Case-Winters and Mudge, "We must draw upon our knowledge of the Presbyterian ethos and our judgement of what sorts of understandings Presbyterians may be expected to accept. We must use our judgement of what is relevant." Case-Winters and Mudge, "The Successor to Peter", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 86.

¹¹⁶ Also see, Kasper, "Reactions of Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Paper 'The Successor to Peter'", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, §§7-9, §§107-109.

In the first round of discussions, while the participants refer to the essential characteristics and norms of the church that “are *de rigueur* for every period and culture”,¹¹⁷ they also acknowledge that “the Church assumes different forms depending on the historical heritage it carries with it and the social and cultural situation in which it is set and in which it grows.”¹¹⁸ In this regard, they concede to the reality of development in the forms that the church assumes in history, which may or may not correspond to the normative character of the church under the authority of the New Testament witness.¹¹⁹ The proprium of theology, therefore, includes “the difficult task of seeking the normative within the relative, and of applying what is thereby found to the concrete realisation of the Church in different historical situations.”¹²⁰

These remarks are resourceful for furthering the Petrine dialogue in several ways. Firstly, it rightly highlights the papal office as representing a specific form of the church for Roman Catholics, which has passed on the historical heritage of their tradition through countless generations, as well as having been influenced and shaped by numerous social and cultural situations in its historical sojourn. The difficulty for the Reformed tradition, however, resided particularly with the question concerning the extent to which this distinctive form of the sixteenth-century church reflected a genuine development out of the New Testament witness. Secondly, it draws attention to the challenging task in ecumenical theology of finding that which is normative within this relative form of a large section of the church.

In other words, the Reformed churches are possibly confronted with the papal office as a potentially legitimate, albeit different, form of the one church. Reformed churches could do well to reflect seriously on such questions as the following: To what extent, if any, has the Petrine office contributed to the transmission of God’s Word and the one faith through the centuries, over and above its chequered history? What aspects of the Petrine ministry, if any, could be recognised as reflecting

¹¹⁷ FR 1977, §18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., §19.

various essential norms and characteristics of the church in its historical outworking?

The participants underline the fallibility of these relative forms of the church in history, which must also include the office of the pope. While the church should ensure that its structures and its life correspond to its calling and essential character,¹²¹ its servants are imperfect agents of God's Word in reality.¹²² The church, as *creatura Verbi*, and its ministers, do not always, in experience, stand "under the living Word of God" as servants of the Word.¹²³ In this light, the participants draw attention to the church's ongoing need for reform and renewal,¹²⁴ since it should never "become set in immobility on the plea that it is immutable, but must above all be listening to the Word of God in which it will discern ... the transformations required of it precisely in virtue of its fidelity to this Word."¹²⁵

In this way, the participants reflect a fertile area for growing a deeper communion between Roman Catholic and Reformed churches through the dialogue on the papal office. The participants concede that all historical forms of the church, including that of the papacy, are fallible in practice and experience, and *ipso facto* in need of the reforming Word of God. This places emphasis on the papal office as a human structure with noble and biblical intentions – yet still human. It therefore provides Reformed churches with an opportunity to faithfully continue their tradition of reform within the church, according to the Word of God, for the benefit of the Petrine office. Roman Catholics would need to be open to the Reformed contributions in this regard as a valuable, legitimate, and propitious gift to the office of the pope for better reflecting that which forms part of the normative church.

5.4.2.2. On church authority and prophetic speaking

In the first round of discussions, the participants also refer to the important role that official church authorities fulfill in society. As representatives of their communities,

¹²¹ Ibid., §55.

¹²² Ibid., §93. See especially Van der Borght, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 474-478, cf. 501-503.

¹²³ FR 1977, §26.

¹²⁴ Ibid., §56. Cf. Douglass, "A Reformed Perspective on the Ecumenical Movement", *Religion Online*, 14-15.

¹²⁵ FR 1977, §61.

they “have to pay careful attention to whether and in what respects they are obliged by their Lord to speak a prophetic and pastoral word to the general public.”¹²⁶ The participants underline the need for the church’s structures, which must include the papal office, to essentially and experientially contradict “the structures of the various sectors of the life of modern secular society: opposing exploitation, oppression, manipulation, intellectual and political pressures of all kinds.”¹²⁷ It behoves churches, therefore, to seek the ongoing renewal of congregations as vital life forms that also influence the wider social and political milieu.¹²⁸ Given the crises confronting the churches and their credibility and witness, the participants acknowledge the urgent need for much expertise in dealing with these manifold problems in society.¹²⁹

These remarks are resourceful for both churches and their dialogue on the Petrine office. In the first place, the participants confront Roman Catholics with the need to review the papal structure. Roman Catholics should reflect on to what extent, if any, the papal structure coincides with or contradicts the problematic structural realities in society. Does the way in which the pope functions in his office oppose or exude exploitation, oppression, manipulation, or different kinds of intellectual and political pressures? Reformed churches have historically and currently maintained a veritable criticism of the papacy on these fronts, which should be listened to by Roman Catholics as a gift to the church at large. Issues requiring further exploration, in this regard, include that of authority and service,¹³⁰ communality,¹³¹ collegiality,¹³² and various papal claims.¹³³

In the second place, the participants confront Reformed churches with the possible value of the pope and his work as a potentially legitimate and propitious ministry of expertise. There is already a rich papal tradition that consistently and actively engages Roman Catholic believers in understanding, interpreting, and responding to a vast array of critical issues in society. The theological and social expertise of the

¹²⁶ Ibid., §58.

¹²⁷ Ibid., §56.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., §57.

¹³⁰ Cf. Ibid., §§93ff, §109.

¹³¹ Cf. Ibid., §§94-96.

¹³² Cf. Ibid., §102, §109.

¹³³ Cf. Ibid., §§39-42.

pope in the past century especially reflects well the ecumenical import of such a role. The Reformed tradition could potentially be better enhanced, equipped, and strengthened as the papal expertise on various societal issues is received as a possible gift to the church at large. Moreover, the potential import of an office of a ministerial president - not merely as a title of honour, but also “as a ministry for the upbuilding of the Church: as leadership, proclamation”¹³⁴ – is also discussed by the participants and could be evidence of another sign of promise for the papal dialogue.

5.4.2.3. *On the reconciliation of memories and church reform*

In the second round of discussions, the participants refer to the legitimate concerns behind both communions’ actions at the Reformation. They point out that “The established leadership of the western church was not generally prepared to agree to the amendments of doctrine, church order, and practice which the Reformers sought”.¹³⁵ The Roman Catholics concede to the logic of reform in the period after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as they readily admit that all was not always well with the medieval church:

Especially denounced at that time were the venality and political and military involvements of some of the popes and members of the curia; the absence of bishops from their dioceses; their often ostentatious wealth and neglect of pastoral duties; the ignorance of many of the lower clergy; the often scandalous lives of clergy, including bishops and certain popes; the disedifying rivalry among the religious orders; pastoral malpractice through misleading teaching about the efficacy of certain rites and rituals; the irrelevance and aridity of theological speculation in the universities and the presence of these same defects in the pulpit; the lack of any organised catechesis for the laity; and a popular piety based to a large extent on superstitious practices.¹³⁶

Roman Catholics point out that while both were interested in reform, the Reformers based their agenda of reform on doctrine, against which Roman Catholics instinctively retaliated for what it seemed to imply, viz. that the church had nurtured an erroneous faith over time.¹³⁷ While Calvin and others appeared “utterly convinced that Rome was unwilling to undertake the profound reform they wanted”,

¹³⁴ Ibid., §109. See also Van der Borgh, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 487-489.

¹³⁵ FR 1990, §21.

¹³⁶ Ibid., §34.

¹³⁷ Ibid., §§36-37.

the Reformers' proposals on church order were attacked and resisted by the church and its popes for its apparent assault on the apostolic foundation of the church. Their doctrinal disputes seemed to call into question the very work of the Spirit, as well as other similar concerns.¹³⁸

In this way, the participants draw attention to their common desire for the integrity of the church, even though the path each communion took in defending this integrity of the church differed from the other and, tragically, forced their separation in history. This is important for wrestling with the theological and ecclesial baggage of the past and for seeking to reconcile both communions in the light of painful memories.¹³⁹ The participants, in this regard, provide a methodological and theological key for seeking to potentially unlock the deadlock on the papal office, i.e. the motif of reform.

This demands, therefore, that the papal office not only be perceived as a structure open to as well as supportive of reform, but that it indeed be shaped by a process of reform. Furthermore, it also demands that the Reformed tradition and its structures not only be open to and supportive of reform, but that it be shaped by a reforming programme, too. It also demands that the Reformed churches contribute to the dialogue on the Petrine office as a dialogue on its future shape and form that reflects and coincides with the Word of God.¹⁴⁰

5.4.2.4. On the church's continuity and its mission

In the second round of discussions, the participants also give attention to the difficulties their different forms of historical existence have caused between the two communions, where they state: "Our two communions regard themselves as

¹³⁸ Ibid., §39.

¹³⁹ Roman Catholics also attempt to clear up some misunderstandings on certain problematic points between Roman Catholics and Reformed churches. For instance, on the matter of infallibility, they point out: "Vatican I did not teach that 'the pope is infallible,' as is popularly imagined. Rather it taught that the pope can, under carefully specified and limited circumstances, officially exercise the infallibility divinely given to the church as a whole, in order to decide questions of faith and morals for the universal church" (Ibid., §51). Nevertheless, the Reformed churches would still struggle with other concerns about the infallibility doctrine. Roman Catholics have often been offended by the Reformed rejection of the episcopacy and papacy, coupled with its pejorative talk (§56), but are also more cognisant nowadays with what factors were fuelling the Reformers in their actions.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Douglass, "A Reformed Perspective on the Ecumenical Movement", *Religion Online*, 14-15.

belonging to the *una sancta* but differ in their understanding of that belonging.”¹⁴¹ When it comes to the continuity of the church through the ages, the participants are concerned with how the church has remained one from generation to generation. They appeal to their common regard for the apostolicity of the church as “a living reality which simultaneously keeps the church in communion with its living source and allows it to renew its youth continually so as to reach the kingdom.”¹⁴² For the Reformed tradition, it is linked to “continuity in the confession of faith and in the teaching of gospel doctrine”,¹⁴³ whereas for Roman Catholics, it is “linked to a certain number of visible signs through which the Spirit works, in particular to the apostolic succession of bishops.”¹⁴⁴

On the visibility and the ministerial order of the Church, they typically differ on “the role of visible structure, particularly in relation to mission and ministry”¹⁴⁵ but nevertheless together appreciate the broader significance of visibility for missiological ends: “The visible/invisible church lives in the world as a structured community. ... Its visible structure is intended to enable the community to serve as an instrument of Christ for the salvation of the world. ... In all its visible activity, its goal is *solī Deo Gloria, ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.”¹⁴⁶ They agree, moreover, that visible order entails “a ministry of word, sacrament, and oversight given by Christ to the church to be carried out by some of its members for the good of all. This triple function of the ministry equips the church for its mission in the world.”¹⁴⁷

The ministry of oversight (*episkopè*) is included in this order, “exercised by church members for the fidelity, unity, harmony, growth, and discipline of the wayfaring people of God under Christ”.¹⁴⁸ They “agree on the need for *episkopè* in the church,

¹⁴¹ FR 1990, §89.

¹⁴² Ibid., §116.

¹⁴³ Ibid., §120. See especially Van der Borcht, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 489-491.

¹⁴⁴ FR 1990, §120. This notion of apostolic succession features as an ongoing bone of contention in their relationship, which therefore poses a challenge for the Reformed to incorporate the pope in their system of ecclesiological beliefs.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., §125.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., §128. See also Higgins, “Plausible Ecumenism”, *Touchstone Magazine*, 4-5.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. FR 1990, §§130ff, especially §132.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., §135. Placing it in its biblical context, they agree: “From the various forms of leadership mentioned in the pastorals there emerged a pattern of *episcopoi*, presbyters, and deacons, which became established by the end of the second century” (§136). The ministry of oversight is hereby recognised as indispensable as they strive to model faithfulness and obedience in the world.

on the local level (for pastoral care in each congregation), on the regional level (for the link of congregations among themselves), and on the universal level (for the guidance of the supranational communion of churches).”¹⁴⁹

The participants’ remarks are resourceful for the papal dialogue. At the very least it shows that while there are important differences between the communions vis-à-vis apostolic succession and episkope, the participants recognise the need for a ministry that protects, preserves, and promotes the integrity and transmission of the church’s mission in historical existence.¹⁵⁰ They recognise, therefore, the necessity and value of a structure of ministry that reflects these dynamics in a faithful and effective way. Such a role is already assumed by the office and work of the pope, even though certain difficulties exist around the nature of his office. Reformed churches, insofar as such a ministry is required, would do well to further explore the import of the papal office for these ends, albeit not without modification in how it presently exists and operates.¹⁵¹

5.4.3. Concluding Remarks

The papacy is still problematic for the Reformed churches, but some progress has been achieved. The Reformed tradition has much to offer the new dialogue on the Petrine office. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of the Reforming Word, the case for Reformed participation and reception could be significantly served.

Disagreement still exists, however, on who is regarded as episkopos at these different levels and what these functions entail (§142).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., §142. See Van der Borcht, *Het ambt her-dacht*, 499-501.

¹⁵⁰ See Ibid., 482-483 and 489-491.

¹⁵¹ In this regard, see Helleman, “The Contribution of John Calvin to an Ecumenical Dialogue on Papal Primacy”, *One in Christ*, 329-332.

CHAPTER 6

LUTHERAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE PROCLAIMED GOSPEL

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In August 2004, the president of the German Evangelical Council, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, met with Pope John Paul II during which he received a gift of a pectoral cross, commemorating the pontiff's twenty-fifth papal anniversary. The Lutheran leader announced that "a new milestone in the pursuit of ecumenical relations between our churches"¹ was being reached through his contact with the pope, whom he appreciated for the depth of his commitment to ecumenical progress. Notwithstanding serious unresolved differences prevailing in discussions between the churches, Huber underlined the steady improvement in relations between Roman Catholics and Lutherans in recent years. His meeting with the pope featured as a distinctively important element in this newfound ecumenical relationship.

A few years earlier in Rome, Pope John Paul II commended some Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians, who were part of an ecumenical group that had been founded in 1946, as "pioneers of ecumenism" for their "attempt to give a world that had fallen apart a new centre in Jesus Christ."² He regarded them as a "laboratory of ecumenism", who offered a promising contribution to the hope of achieving full unity in the future. Moreover, given their choice of Rome as a meeting place for their conference, the pope suggested: "perhaps one day, with patient dialogue, we may succeed together in finding a way in which the Petrine ministry can carry out a service to truth and love that is recognised by one and all".³

¹ See "Pope gives Pectoral Cross to Lutheran Bishop", at www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=31712. Accessed 03/09/2004.

² See Pope John Paul II, "Address of John Paul II to an ecumenical group of Catholic and Evangelical Theologians: Tuesday, 3 April 2001", at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf_jpii_spe_20010403_teologi-tedeschi_en.html. Accessed 28/10/2002.

³ Ibid.

These two accounts appear to confirm what Frederick M. Bliss posits, “that many of the issues judged to be problems at the time of the Reformation, and in the relationship between the two churches since, have now become items of dialogue.”⁴ It is ironic that the Roman church and its papacy, which formerly prevailed as an ecumenical and theological dagger in the side of Martin Luther and his Reformation heirs, have in recent decades featured in a conspicuously different light for the Lutheran tradition. Lutheran theologians think and work alongside their Roman Catholic counterparts and Lutheran leaders visit Rome and meet with the pope. In fact, as John L. Allen rightly notes, the international dialogue between these two communions presently enjoy “a reputation as the most theologically substantive of the various ecumenical conversations.”⁵

Furthermore, and particularly noteworthy in the light of Luther’s troubled relationship with the pope, is the fact that Lutheran ecumenists are presently responsible for carrying out the most intensive study and reflection on the Petrine ministry. Scott H. Hendrix, who investigates the motive behind Luther’s opposition of the papacy to the point that a lasting break with the Roman church resulted, contends that “Luther’s attitude toward the papacy was directly related to his concern with the reform of the church.”⁶ Whatever harshness characterised his rhetoric and actions, Wolfhart Pannenberg points out that Luther’s papal repudiation was an empirical rather than a blanket judgement.⁷ In other words, the Reformer was intensely concerned with the problematic manner in which the crucially important office of the pope (as he regarded the papal structure)⁸ was

⁴ Frederick M. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church Is Ecumenical and What She Is Doing About It* (Franklin: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 115.

⁵ John L. Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican’s Enforcer of the Faith* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 232.

⁶ Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), ix.

⁷ Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Das Papsttum und die Zukunft der Ökumene. Anmerkungen aus lutherischer Sicht” in V. von Aristi et al (Eds), *Das Papstamt. Dienst oder Hindernis für die Ökumene?* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1985), 141. Cited in Harding Meyer, “Suprema auctoritas ideo ab omne errore immunis”: The Lutheran Approach to Primacy” in James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: “Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue”. A Symposium Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 18.

⁸ According to Hendrix, “Luther himself was not interested in individual popes or in conditions at Rome” per se; “For Luther the papacy was important because it was the chief pastoral office in the church, and its claims and pronouncements affected the lives of people regardless of who was the

being exercised historically during his specific era, which essentially undermined the integrity of the church and its proclaimed gospel.⁹

This chapter explores the ways in which the papal office is treated within the new ecumenical relationship between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. While the Lutheran churches represent a tradition that has achieved significant progress in the Petrine dialogue in recent decades, it is theologically naïve to presume that all is ecumenically well. Through an overview of how Lutherans are currently talking about the papal office, this chapter will assess to what extent they still regard it as a major ecumenical scandal for future relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

6.2. THE NATURE OF LUTHERAN CHRISTIANITY

The Lutheran tradition was born through the renewal movement of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and others during the sixteenth-century German Reformation, which progressively forged an international theological tradition that was shaped by the influences of scholasticism and pietism in the seventeenth century, rationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and unification in the modern era.¹⁰ To date Lutheranism globally constitutes the largest of the churches that emerged from the Reformation.

The term ‘Lutheran’ was vituperatively coined by the Reformer’s Roman Catholic opponents in an aggressive attempt to discredit the cause of the Reformation as being of a purely human origin.¹¹ What Luther and his co-workers sought, however,

incumbent. Luther’s attitude toward the papacy [therefore] was directly related to his concern with the reform of the church.” Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy*, ix.

⁹ For an insightful commentary on Luther’s last sermon in which his views on the papacy are readily discernible, see Patrick Lyons, “Luther’s Last Sermon: In Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of Martin Luther’s Death” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. V, No. 3 (1996), 304-313.

¹⁰ See the brief albeit insightful historical sketch by T.F. Johnson, “Lutheran Tradition” in Walter A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 719 and 721-722. For a similarly cursory yet more technical overview, see Gerhard O. Forde, “Lutheranism” in Alister E. McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 354-358.

¹¹ See Carl E. Braaten, “Lutheranism” in Adrian Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 401; Johnson, “Lutheran Tradition” in Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 719; cf. David S. Yeago, “Lutheranism” in Trevor A. Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 342.

was not “to found a new community named after himself”,¹² but rather “to renew the one holy catholic church according to the gospel.”¹³ In a highly insightful and substantiated case, Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson underline catholicity as the true intention of the Reformation, where the primordial desire of Luther and others was “to reform a church that lived in continuity with the church the Creed calls ‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic.’”¹⁴ For this reason, as E. Theodore Bachmann states, “Lutherans always considered themselves as part of the church catholic and evangelical, bound to the scriptures, and confessing the faith set forth in the three ecumenical creeds.”¹⁵

The essential nature of the Lutheran tradition is intimately bound up with the primacy of the proclaimed gospel.¹⁶ The church, according to Luther, is “the gathering of all believers, in which the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered in accord with the gospel.”¹⁷ In this regard, Laurence L. White notes that the Lutheran Reformation was essentially “a rediscovery of the pure Gospel as the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.”¹⁸ For this reason, “Lutheranism has never defined itself in terms of polity, piety, or popularity, unlike both Rome and Geneva. Lutheranism is not a matter of

¹² Braaten, “Lutheranism” in Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, 401.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, “Preface” in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *The Catholicity of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), vii.

¹⁵ E. Theodore Bachmann, “Lutheranism” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 724. He states, moreover, that Lutherans are increasingly “being drawn towards an ‘evangelical catholicity’ which sees Lutheranism as a movement which is called to offer a concrete proposal concerning the gospel to the church catholic” (727).

¹⁶ See Joseph A. Burgess, “Lutherans and the Papacy” in Peter J. McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 19-21.

¹⁷ “The Augsburg Confession VII” in Theodore G. Tappert (Ed.), *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 32. Yeago underlines this Lutheran preoccupation with the pure gospel that is rightly proclaimed as follows: “It is this identification of the saving word and action of God with the word and sacraments proclaimed and celebrated in the church that chiefly distinguished Lutheranism from other forms of non-Roman Christianity after the Reformation.” See Yeago, “Lutheranism” in Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 343.

¹⁸ Laurence L. White, “What Does It Mean to be Lutheran Today?” (April 3, 1997), 2, at www.mntio.com/articles/bissar91.htm. Accessed 20/12/2002. His comments are in line with Herman Sasse’s claim that “the Reformation was a renovation of the church brought about by the rediscovery and renewed proclamation of the pure doctrine of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins.” See Herman Sasse, *Here We Stand* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), 61. See also how proclamation is identified by Luther as a mark of the true church: Gerhard O. Forde, “The Word That Kills and Makes Alive” in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Marks of the Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1-5.

institutional loyalty or denominational affiliation. It is, and must always be, a matter of doctrine.”¹⁹

In this light, the Lutheran churches have sustained a veritable preoccupation with understanding and communicating the pure gospel, *a fortiori* discernible in their prolific work on the church and justification. Since the “emphasis on the primacy of the Gospel is the essence from which the vitality, dynamic power, and ecumenicity of Lutheranism is derived”,²⁰ an exploration and assessment of Lutheran perspectives on the Petrine institution must, therefore, investigate the extent to which the nature and role of the papal office coincides with and supports the Lutheran methodological axis of the gospel proclaimed in all its purity and power.

6.3. LUTHERAN – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

Lutheranism has grappled extensively with the tension “between identity and ecumenicity.”²¹ According to Yeago, “Lutherans have reacted with both caution and enthusiasm to the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, and world Lutheranism remains deeply divided over the compatibility of authentic Lutheran identity with ecumenicity.”²² Three main viewpoints are in mind. In the first place, there are those conservative Lutherans, mostly outside the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), who associate ecumenism with “doctrinal indifference and compromise”²³ on the ground that the communion ideal necessitates wholesale agreement “on *all* points of theological conviction.”²⁴ In the second place, there are those ecumenically-involved Lutheran churches of the LWF, who call the ecumenical

¹⁹ White, “What Does It Mean to be Lutheran Today?”, 3. Moreover, while Lutherans vary among themselves liturgically and organisationally, they “are doctrinally and legally identified by the same confession of faith which their political protectors had presented to the imperial diet at Augsburg in 1530.” Consequentially, “To whatever degree professed, the Augsburg confession (Confessio Augustana) and Luther’s small catechism of 1529 (“the Bible of the laity”) have been the chief symbols of mutual recognition among Lutherans for more than 470 years.” See Bachmann, “Lutheranism” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 724.

²⁰ White, “What Does It Mean to be Lutheran Today?”, 5.

²¹ See Yeago, “Lutheranism” in Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 344-346.

²² *Ibid.*, 345.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

movement into question on the ground that “Lutheranism is *systematically* incompatible with other forms of Christianity, especially Catholicism.”²⁵

A third constituency within contemporary Lutheranism are those ecumenically-engaged Lutherans who regard the ecumenical enterprise as important and necessary on the grounds that their ecclesial tradition “shares in the common doctrinal and ecclesial *Gestalt* of catholic Christianity”²⁶ and that its context may indeed sustain and strengthen the Lutheran ethos.²⁷ On the basis of this third perspective, Roman Catholics and Lutherans have advanced in dialogue, given their “mutual commitment to the cause of visible Christian unity”²⁸ as well as their joint understanding that “the task that lies ahead is to find the ways and means to overcome the misunderstandings, the misinterpretations, and the deviations”²⁹ of the past. An exploration of Lutherans and their treatment of the papacy, therefore, will also be required to ascertain to what extent, if any, the Petrine office sustains and fortifies the Lutheran gospel ethos through the formal ecumenical dialogues and activities between Roman Catholics and Lutherans.

While some may contest this claim of progress and advancement by arguing that not much has changed in the life of the average parish or congregation, others would contend that crucial ground has been covered step by step at the formal theological level. The Roman Catholic George Tavad maintains that as far as the latter is concerned, “there are significant signposts for the future.”³⁰ Their prevailing ecumenical orientation and commitment is significant on several fronts. In the first place, as Tavad posits, it “is the most important of all the dialogues that have followed Vatican Council II among the Churches of the West, since it was with

²⁵ Ibid. Yeago explains that for these churches, “ecumenical *rapprochement* with other Christians based on discussion of particular doctrinal issues only conceals the radical morphological incompatibility, the ‘basic difference’ (*Grunddifferenz*), which underlies historic points of confessional conflict.” In this process, suggests Yeago, “the integrity of the Lutheran form of Christianity is inevitably corrupted.”

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 115.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ George Tavad, “The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in North America” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1998), 270. He explains: “At the level of their official representatives the opposite sides of the Reformation divide are learning to understand each other’s thinking, to work jointly toward a common expression of faith and its implications, and even to speak the other’s theological language when necessary or useful, either to be better understood in conversation or, when it is necessary, for the better education of the people.”

Martin Luther that the Reformation started.”³¹ Therefore, in the second place, “this dialogue is a model for all ecumenical conversations that try to overcome the separations of the sixteenth century.”³²

6.3.1. A Brief Overview

Official ecumenical discussions between the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran churches commenced at the international level in 1967 through the SPCU and the LWF. National dialogues between the two communions started already in 1965, even before the completion of the Second Vatican Council.³³ The primary concern of each of their consultations has resided with “unity in the truth, the elimination of divisive differences, and therefore the achievement of the full realisation of the unity given in Christ.”³⁴

The first phase of international consultations between these two communions took place during the period 1967-1972 on the subject of “The Gospel and the Church”,³⁵ which focused heuristically on traditional problem areas such as justification, Scripture and tradition, reciprocal recognition of ministry, and papal primacy. As Bliss points out, the first-phase discussions revealed “a developing convergence”³⁶ on the matters of justification and Scripture-tradition, but raised the need for more study on such issues as apostolic succession and eucharistic hospitality and intercommunion.

³¹ Ibid., 268-269.

³² Ibid., 269.

³³ For a comprehensive description and overview of the national discussions in the U.S.A., see John Reumann, “A Perspective on the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the United States, 1965-1993” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1998), 277-289. For most of their dialogue statements, see Joseph A. Burgess and Jeffrey Gros (Eds), *Building Unity: Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States. Ecumenical Documents IV* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 85-290. For a brief description of U.S.A. and other national consultations, see Michael Root, “Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 721-722.

³⁴ William G. Rusch, “Introductory Note” in William G. Rusch and Jeffrey Gros (Eds), *Deepening Communion: International Ecumenical Documents with Roman Catholic Participation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 3.

³⁵ See “Report of the Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission on ‘The Gospel and the Church’, 1972 (‘Malta Report’)” in Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (Geneva: WCC, 1984), 168-189. Hereafter referred to as FR 1972.

³⁶ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 116.

The second phase occurred during the period 1973-1984 on three pairs of documents. The first pair was commemorative in nature, occasioned by the Augsburg confession anniversary ("All Under One Christ", 1980)³⁷ and the five-hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth ("Martin Luther – Witness to Jesus Christ", 1983).³⁸ The second pair was doctrinal in nature, and focused on the eucharist ("The Eucharist", 1978)³⁹ and ministry ("The Ministry in the Church", 1981).⁴⁰ The third pair was heuristic in nature, attempting to outline what shape and form the ecumenical process between the churches might assume ("Ways to Community", 1980;⁴¹ "Facing Unity", 1985⁴²).

The third phase during the period 1986-1993 focused on "Church and Justification",⁴³ to date the longest document yet, in which the participants sought "to test the widely perceived consensus on justification by analysing its implications for ecclesiology."⁴⁴ Among the controversial issues raised were the institutional continuity of the church, ordained ministry in the church, the place of binding church doctrine and the teaching role of the ministry, and church jurisdiction.⁴⁵ The attained progress on the theme of justification was publicly noted in the release of the dialogue's "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification"⁴⁶ in 1999.

³⁷ See "All Under One Christ, 1980: Statement on the Augsburg Confession by the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission" in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 241-247. Hereafter referred to as FR 1980-b.

³⁸ See "Martin Luther – Witness to Jesus Christ" in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 438-442. Hereafter referred to as FR 1983.

³⁹ See "The Eucharist: Final Report of the Joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission, 1978" in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 190-214. Hereafter referred to as FR 1978.

⁴⁰ See "The Ministry in the Church, 1981" in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 248-275. Hereafter referred to as FR 1981.

⁴¹ See "Ways to Community, 1980" in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 215-240. Hereafter referred to as FR 1980-a.

⁴² See "Facing Unity" in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 443-484. Hereafter referred to as FR 1985.

⁴³ See "Church and Justification" in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 485-565. Hereafter referred to as FR 1993.

⁴⁴ Root, "Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue" in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 721.

⁴⁵ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 118.

⁴⁶ See "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 566-582. Hereafter referred to as FR 1999. Matthias Türk suggests that the signing of this document counts as "the most significant ecumenical step forward – an ecumenical milestone – up to the present day." He points out that this agreement "concerns the centre of the Gospel and the ground of the separation between Catholics and Lutherans for more than 450 years is a gift of the Holy Spirit". See Matthias Türk, "Relations of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with the Lutheran World Federation" in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002. Articles*

A fourth phase has been underway since 1995 on such topics as “(a) the apostolicity of the church, including the episcopacy and a universal ministry for Christian unity; (b) mariology, the saints, sacramentology in general, and the number of sacraments; (c) a study of certain ethical and moral issues; and (d) a review of matters already considered so as to incorporate new ideas that may have arisen”.⁴⁷

The following section gives attention to the various ecumenical dialogue texts of the first three phases in order to identify how Lutheran and Roman Catholic leaders are treating the subject of the papal office in recent decades. Thereafter, some concluding observations out of this cursory analysis are discussed for their relevancy concerning the future of the papacy in Lutheran-Roman Catholic discourse and relations.

6.3.2. Malta Report, 1972

6.3.2.1. Concerning papal primacy and the primacy of the gospel

The Report, in the context of its reflection on the gospel and the church's unity, refers to the question of papal primacy as a problem for the Lutheran-Roman Catholic relationship. The Roman Catholic participants stressed the “new interpretive framework”⁴⁸ in which Vatican II placed the primacy of the pope, where the primacy of jurisdiction is advanced “as ministerial service to the community and

by Members of the Staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Vatican City (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 31. For further reading with commentary and critique, see the following: Robert W. Jenson, “The Church as Communion: A Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue-Consensus-Statement Dreamed in the Night” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Winter 1995), 68-78; William G. Rusch, “Should Catholics and Lutherans Continue to Condemn One Another? What is At Stake in 1997?” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. V, No. 3 (1996), 282-291; various contributors, “The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification’: Soteriological and Ecclesiological Implications” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), 1-108; Thomas L. Sheridan, “Newman and Luther on Justification” in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 2001), 217-245; William G. Rusch (Ed.), *Justification and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement: The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2003), 149pp; Walter Cardinal Kasper, “Address of Walter Cardinal Kasper to the General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 33, No. 8 (September 2004), 14-15.

⁴⁷ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 118. See also “Relations with the Lutheran World Federation”, *Information Service* No. 109 (2002/I-II), 57-58.

⁴⁸ FR 1972, §66.

as bond of the unity of the church.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, they point out that the papal office “includes the task of caring for legitimate diversity among local churches”, even though its “concrete shape ... may vary greatly in accordance with changing historical conditions.”⁵⁰

As far as the Lutheran participants are concerned, they draw attention to three matters. In the first place, they acknowledge the potentially legitimate role of the papacy as “a ministerial service of the communion of churches”,⁵¹ while conceding to the problematic state of affairs their tradition has encountered by virtue of “their lack of such an effective service of unity”,⁵² as “no local church should exist in isolation since it is a manifestation of the universal church.”⁵³ In this way, then, the papal office “as a visible sign of the unity of the churches was ... not excluded insofar as it is subordinated to the primacy of the gospel by theological reinterpretation and practical restructuring.”⁵⁴

In the second place, they still wrestle with the controversial question of “whether the primacy of the pope is necessary for the church, or whether it represents only a fundamentally possible function.”⁵⁵ In the third place and notwithstanding the earlier question, both Roman Catholic and Lutheran participants unanimously posit that their lack of consensus on the primacy question should not serve as the determining factor on “the question of altar fellowship and of mutual recognition of ministerial offices”.⁵⁶

6.3.3. All under One Christ, 1980

6.3.3.1. Concerning the papacy as an open question and unresolved problem

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., §67. Cf. FR 1993, §106.

⁵⁶ FR 1972, §67.

The Report commemorating the Augsburg confession takes cognisance of “still open questions and unresolved problems”⁵⁷ in the spirit of ecumenical honesty in the dialogue. In this regard, the participants highlight the question of the papal office, the primacy of jurisdiction, and the infallibility of the pope as apt cases in point.⁵⁸ Given the significance of the Augsburg confession for Lutherans, it is particularly noteworthy that a position on these issues is absent.⁵⁹

6.3.4. Martin Luther – Witness to Jesus Christ, 1983

6.3.4.1. Concerning Martin Luther and papal authority

The Report commemorating Martin Luther’s birth draws attention to the struggle that existed between Luther and the pope during his specific era.⁶⁰ The participants maintain that this conflict “turned more and more on the question of final authority in matters of faith.”⁶¹ Based on his appeal to Scripture in this dispute, Luther “came to doubt that all doctrinal decisions of the popes and councils were binding in conscience”⁶² in the light of the primacy of the proclaimed gospel.⁶³ As the relationship between the Reformer and the church authorities became increasingly hostile, Luther assumed a polemical attitude toward the pope, whom he came to repudiate as “Antichrist”.⁶⁴ In this way, then, the participants highlight the hostile and problematic character of Luther’s relationship with the pope in a manner that identifies the cause of the conflict not with the papacy in general, but specifically with the existential and theological tension between the authority of the primatial gospel and the centralised, over-emphasised authority of the popes.⁶⁵

6.3.5. Ministry in the Church, 1981

6.3.5.1. Concerning the papacy as a serious theological problem

⁵⁷ FR 1980-b, §23.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ FR 1983, §14.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Cf. FR 1993, §§210ff.

⁶⁴ FR 1983, §15.

⁶⁵ Ibid., §21; cf. §23.

The Report on ministry in the church identifies the papacy as “a serious problem between our churches.”⁶⁶ They underline “the complexity of the exegetical and historical problems”⁶⁷ associated with the papal office, which demands of them “a separate study”⁶⁸ in order to proceed deeper in their understanding of ministry in the church. In this way, the participants regard the papal question as crucial for their future ecumenical agenda.

6.3.5.2. Concerning the papal office as a ministry of unity for the church

The Report on ministry, in a section on the teaching ministry and teaching authority, refers to the Roman Catholic position on the matter of papal authority and infallibility as a divine right and responsibility in the face of controversies that endanger the church’s unity of faith.⁶⁹ In this regard, according to this doctrine, “where the bishops interpret the revealed faith in universal agreement with each other and in communion with the Bishop of Rome, their witness has final authority and infallibility.”⁷⁰

Furthermore, such decisions do not require “a special consent by the totality of the local congregations of the faithful, but they depend on extensive reception in order to have living power and spiritual fruitfulness in the church.”⁷¹ While Lutherans do not share this same high view of authority,⁷² the Roman Catholic participants remind the churches of the need for the protection of the church’s unity of faith in the midst of ecumenical threats and the manner in which the papal office is designed to be positively involved in collegial fashion, yet posing doubts over the ideals of communality and subsidiarity in these matters.

⁶⁶ FR 1981, §3.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., §52.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Cf. Ibid., §53.

In a later section on episcopal ministry, the participants again refer to the papal office in relation to “the question of ministry to the universal unity of the church.”⁷³ The Roman Catholics underline how the *communio* between the local churches and their bishops find their “point of reference in communion with the Church of Rome and the Bishop of Rome as the holder of the Chair of Peter.”⁷⁴ Their position, grounded in Christ’s promise to Peter, maintains that “the Lord has transmitted to the Bishop of Rome, as the successor to Peter, the supreme pastoral office in the church”⁷⁵ as a ministry “to serve the unity of the universal church and legitimate diversity in the church.”⁷⁶ Moreover, since his service of unity to the whole church is one “in faith and mission”,⁷⁷ he receives the promise “that through the power of the Holy Spirit he is preserved from error in teaching when he solemnly declares the faith of the church (infallibility).”⁷⁸ As Peter was a witness of faith, so, too, the pope in “his succession to the chair of Peter.”⁷⁹

In these ways, then, the participants draw attention to the Petrine office as a ministry of unity in the church, in line with the ministry of Peter.⁸⁰ While Lutherans may accept the need for and value of such a ministry among the churches, even through the pope, they would not accept some of the accompanying claims such as papal infallibility or church indefectibility. Also, they emphasise the hope that the problematic papacy be “structurally renewed in the light of Holy Scripture and the tradition”⁸¹ in order that “it may more and more in the future provide an important service to unity.”⁸²

6.3.6. Ways to Community, 1980

6.3.6.1. Concerning supra-congregational leadership and the Petrine office

⁷³ Ibid., §67.

⁷⁴ Ibid., §69. Cf. FR 1985, §94 and §100; FR 1993, §96 and §106.

⁷⁵ FR 1981, §67.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., §70.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., §71.

⁸¹ Ibid.; cf. §73.

⁸² Ibid., §71; cf. §§72-73.

The Report on steps toward unity contends that the “*actualisation of ministries of church leadership beyond the congregational level* is of decisive significance for possible mutual readiness to enter the fellowship of the historic episcopacy or of the Petrine office.”⁸³ In this way, the participants point the ecumenical spotlight on the papal office for its potential contribution to assist the churches at large with leadership beyond the congregational level.⁸⁴

They do, however, draw apt attention to the need for credibility in how such a ministry should be practised. Not only does “a credible practice of church government ... avoid the dangers of bureaucracy and anonymous administration”,⁸⁵ but there should also be understandable policies and an unmistakable “concern for cooperation with all who serve in the church.”⁸⁶ Moreover, a measure of spiritual authority, “and not mere juridical competence”,⁸⁷ should be present. Concluding, they assert: “In these ways the directives and decisions of those who exercise oversight (or *episcopē*) will be visibly related to what actually is needed and their words will possess an intrinsic authority.”⁸⁸ In this way, then, the participants highlight the demand for an accountable Petrine service.

6.3.7. Facing Unity, 1985

6.3.7.1. Concerning the change of attitude by Pope John Paul II and Pope Paul VI regarding Luther and Lutheranism

The Report on facing unity takes cognisance of how post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism has reassessed its view of the Lutheran churches, motivated *inter alia* by Pope John Paul II's ecumenical humility and commitments.⁸⁹ The pope notes that recent scientific researches by Lutheran and Roman Catholic scholars ushered in “the delineation of a more complete and more differentiated picture of Luther's personality and of the complex texture of the social, political and ecclesial historical

⁸³ FR 1980-a, §88.

⁸⁴ Cf. FR 1985, §§102-103.

⁸⁵ FR 1980-a, §88.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid. Cf. FR 1985, §§127-131.

⁸⁹ E.g. Ibid., §§51ff.

realities of the first half of the 16th century.”⁹⁰ “Consequently,” he continues, “there is clearly outlined the deep religious feeling of Luther who was driven with burning passion by the question of eternal salvation.”⁹¹ Furthermore, both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have reflected a repentant papacy in the search for forgiveness and reconciliation.⁹²

In these ways, for example, the participants draw attention to the way in which recent popes have reflected an ecumenical commitment and confession, and therefore also to the changing face of the papacy before Lutheran eyes, where “the papal office and its holders appear in a new light that makes former condemnations and the hostile images of the past untenable.”⁹³

6.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LUTHERAN – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

Several observations are now provided vis-à-vis the problem and promise of the Petrine office in reference to the Lutheran primacy of the proclaimed gospel, with special attention directed at those signs of stuckness and hope that demand careful consideration between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. At the heart of these ecumenical questions lie ecclesiological concerns and opportunities. The history of Luther and Lutheranism in relation to Roman Catholicism is a narrative interwoven with ecclesiological threads, where the identity and authority of the church is at stake.⁹⁴ In this light, as Matthias Türk reflects on the future of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue, “it is the ecclesiological differences that both partners will have to discuss in their ongoing dialogue”.⁹⁵

6.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

⁹⁰ Ibid., §51.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² E.g. Ibid., §52.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ For example, see the following discussions: Richard John Neuhaus, “Newman, Luther, and the Unity of Christians” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (1997), 284-288; William G. Rusch, “Putting the ‘E’ ‘Ecclesia’ Back into the ELCA” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (May 2004), 1.

⁹⁵ Türk, “Relations of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with the Lutheran World Federation” in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002*, 33.

The preceding overview of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue texts reveals quite a few direct references to the papacy and several sections addressing other cognate topics and concerns. These include the following issues that continue the problematic character and reception of the Petrine office among Lutheran churches: the claim that the communion with the Bishop of Rome is necessary for communion and primacy, the unresolved questions of jurisdictional primacy and papal infallibility, the over-emphasised and centralised authority of the pope, the manner in which the papal office is exercised, the complexity of exegetical and historical conundrums around the papal institution, and so on.

6.4.1.1. *The problem of an absolutist political ecclesiology*

Lutheran churches grapple with a Roman Catholic ecclesiological framework that they repudiate as political rather than missiological in orientation. The Petrine office is deeply embedded in such a framework that tends to place, as Lutherans argue, excessive emphasis on structural arrangement in the church. Luther and Lutherans do not reject other churches and structures on the basis of their particular form or organisation, since they “denied that Scripture prescribed *any* detailed church order, beyond the centrality of the assembly around the word and the sacrament and the institution of the gospel ministry to preside in that assembly.”⁹⁶ As Yeago maintains, organisational structures are “matters of human law and custom”,⁹⁷ but are certainly required “to serve the mission of the gospel and the unity in faith and communion of love among the churches”.⁹⁸

Taking cognisance of this political ecclesiology, Lutheran churches vehemently question what then becomes an absolutist ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism,⁹⁹ which grounds ecclesiality in the church’s communion with the Bishop of Rome. Such an ecclesiology has led to a high view of the pope, as seen in the titles, power,

⁹⁶ Yeago, “Lutheranism” in Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 343-344.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* See especially David S. Yeago, “The Papal Office and the Burdens of History: A Lutheran View” in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II’s Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 98-123, *passim*; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 47-49.

⁹⁹ See Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 39. Here Kärkkäinen refers to the extent to which Luther was influenced at the Reformation by the Roman Catholic position that regarded the church/hierarchy as absolute.

and claims associated with the papacy in history. Moreover, such an ecclesiology has often implied that the Petrine office, as it presently exists, is irreformable and without need of modification in any way.

According to William G. Rusch, “the radical concentration of the understanding of the church for the Lutheran Reformation”¹⁰⁰ resided in the stress “on the right proclamation of the gospel”,¹⁰¹ which he summarises on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions as follows: “the church is a community, a *congregatio sanctorum*, persons graciously justified by God for Christ’s sake, thus a community of persons, visible, and a spiritual reality, brought together by the Holy Spirit through the gospel in Word and sacraments.”¹⁰² But more specifically of relevance, he asserts that “the Augsburg Confession and the other documents of the Lutheran Confessions make no claim to any one organisation or polity as a requirement for the church to be the church – an extremely critical point.”¹⁰³

In this regard, Lutherans take issue with Roman Catholicism’s position that communion between Lutherans and Roman Catholics necessitates consensus on the Petrine agency. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the ecumenically notorious Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), on once being asked about the WCC’s call for an “ecumenical council of the entire church of Jesus Christ, in the sense of the ancient, undivided church,” retorted that the concept of Christian unity would remain “a romantic, unrealistic dream” without the “Petrine principle.”¹⁰⁴

Ratzinger’s remark deeply concerns Lutherans for what it seems to imply, i.e. firstly, that genuine Christian communion is grounded on a particular form or structure of ministry rather than the ideal of the proclaimed gospel, and secondly, that true Christian communion means *redintegratio* or reintegration with Rome in the spirit of pre-Vatican II theology.¹⁰⁵ Harding Meyer notes that while the question of its

¹⁰⁰ Rusch, “Putting the ‘E’ ‘Ecclesia’ Back into the ELCA”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Cited in Allen, *Cardinal Ratzinger*, 235.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Reinhard Hütter, “Ecumenism and Christian Unity – Abstract Reunification or Living Concord? A Lutheran Approach to the Encyclical “*Ut Unum Sint* – That They may be One” in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 192; John Cardinal Willebrands, “Roman Catholic/Lutheran Dialogue in the U.S.A. – Papal Primacy: An Appraisal” in *One in Christ*, 210-213.

necessity is no longer related to its necessity for salvation, the question of its ecclesial necessity “raises for Lutherans great difficulties and certainly it can not be answered in a way which questions the former and the present ecclesial status of the Lutheran churches.”¹⁰⁶

6.4.1.2. The problem of a clericalistic ecclesiology

Lutheran churches find difficulty with what might be labelled a clericalistic ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism, which helps to explain the particular attention and status attributed to the Bishop of Rome and the papal institution, to a large extent at the expense of those on the lower rungs in the hierarchical ordering of the church.

According to Mitzi Budde, the role of the laity had waned after the peace of Constantine, which increasingly ushered in the clericalism of the medieval Roman church from the fourth century onward.¹⁰⁷ The power that was vested in the clergy in the ensuing centuries in the Roman church is to some extent understandable and even justifiable in the face of the vexing problem of lay investiture.¹⁰⁸ The church practised a very pronounced distinction between clergy and laity, as Roman Catholicism through most of the medieval period focused its theology on the church united around the office of the bishop.¹⁰⁹ This notwithstanding, the preoccupation with the clergy and pope in the sixteenth century revealed its own set of problems and concerns, as the Reformers took offence at various abuses on the clergy and papal fronts.

¹⁰⁶ Meyer, “The Lutheran Approach to Primacy” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 29. Meyer also offers some proposals for the way ahead on this conundrum.

¹⁰⁷ Mitzi J. Budde, “Lutheran-Roman Catholic Convergence on the Theology and Ministry of the Laity” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 32, No. 8 (September 2003), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Robert McGlory, in a telling case for explaining what factors motivated the increasing power and status that would accompany clergy and especially the popes, refers to the problem of lay investiture, “a system that allowed kings or secular princes to appoint bishops within their territories”. The first allegiance or loyalty of these bishops were owed to their sponsoring authorities or lords, to whom they had often paid handsomely for their appointments. This reality, as one among many other examples, highlights the abuse of responsibility as well as the manipulative and self-serving attitudes that would increasingly characterise lay involvement in ecclesiastical affairs, and ultimately paved the way for a more powerful and authoritarian approach by clergy in their governance and work in the church. See Robert McGlory, *Power and the Papacy: The People and Politics Behind the Doctrine of Infallibility* (Ligouri: Triumph, 1997), 18ff.

¹⁰⁹ Budde, “Lutheran-Roman Catholic Convergence on the Theology and Ministry of the Laity”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 1.

In this setting, “Luther is generally credited with developing the theology of the priesthood of all believers and raising the profile of the laity”,¹¹⁰ a position that became a key theme during the Reformation and which he maintained “was in continuity with the early church”.¹¹¹ As Yeago rightly points out, Luther repudiated any absolute division between the clergy and laity, given that “Christ established the church not by endowing a special clerical group with power to form and govern a community in his name, but by entrusting the message of salvation to his apostles.”¹¹² Hence, the entire church receives the proclaimed gospel and, *ipso facto*, all together share in ministerial responsibility. However, “Luther’s high view of the laity did not negate, in his thought, the need for clergy in the church.”¹¹³

In reaction fashion, sixteenth-century Roman Catholicism assumed a negative stance against such Lutheran theological emphases. Budde refers to the outcome: “Partly in reaction to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent emphasised the ministry of the priest and de-emphasised the ministry of the baptised. The result was a deepened clericalism in the Roman church. Lay leadership within the liturgy ended until the twentieth century.”¹¹⁴ Women, too, were part of this general lay de-emphasis. The history of Lutheranism, therefore, is a narrative that has striven to affirm “the biblically attested view of the church as the people of God who are responsible for an orderly succession and execution of mission by the partnership of clergy and laity.”¹¹⁵

While Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism have admittedly converged in their respective theologies of the laity in the past century, the papacy remains problematic for Lutherans especially in regard to its relationship with the laity and their issues. The pope is criticised as authoritarian and unfeeling, and the papacy is rebuked for its failure to embody an image of ministry in the church that reflects communality,

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. See also the helpful description of Luther’s position and its substantiation in Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 42-44.

¹¹² David S. Yeago, “Luther, Martin (1483-1546)” in Hart (Ed.), *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, 333.

¹¹³ Budde, “Lutheran-Roman Catholic Convergence on the Theology and Ministry of the Laity”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 104.

subsidiarity, and collegiality. The specific matter of its refusal to admit women to the ministerial priesthood is another problematic case in point. These issues are of deep concern to Lutherans within Roman Catholicism's clericalistic ecclesiology.

6.4.2. Signs of Hope

While serious ecclesiological reservations and difficulties continue for Lutherans vis-à-vis the Petrine office, current relations between Lutheran and Roman Catholic representatives also reveal significant areas of convergence and cooperation. Lutherans consider the possibility of the papal office as a Petrine ministry of service to the unity of the church's faith; that the problematic papacy may represent an open question; that Luther conditionally rejected the papacy; that a need for supra-congregational leadership in the church exists; and so on. Other strategic points of ecclesiological entry are discernible within the ecumenical texts of the two communions, which could potentially assist either church to further the Petrine dialogue.

6.4.2.1. On the historical actualisation of the gospel in and through the structures of the church

In the first phase of discussions, the participants address various "theological questions which are of essential significance for the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran churches"¹¹⁶ under the general theme of "The Gospel and the Church". Employing the key concept "gospel" to examine more constructively the variety of controversial points in contemporary theology and ecclesiology,¹¹⁷ such as the papacy, they concede that "ultimately Lutherans and Catholics separated over the issue of the right understanding of the gospel"¹¹⁸ during the sixteenth century period. In this way, they reconceptualise ecclesiological problems and divisions in direct relation to the gospel ideal, and *ipso facto* offer a new starting point for approaching longstanding problems in the church, such as the papal office.

¹¹⁶ FR 1972, *Preface*.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, §7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, §14.

The new starting point of the gospel ideal in the discussions is potentially promising for furthering the Petrine dialogue. In the first place, it suggests criteria for assessing the legitimacy of the papal institution that are more theologically affirming of Lutheran ecclesiology. Luther and his ecclesial heirs historically failed to recognise the papal office as a legitimate structure of the church ministry not so much because they could find no obvious warrant for such a form in the New Testament tradition (as is a problem for several Protestant churches), but because it seemingly proved to be illegitimate in the manner in which it was exercised. The papal office did not readily reflect the Lutheran ethos of the proclaimed gospel.

Concerning “the criteria by means of which one may distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate later developments”,¹¹⁹ the participants underline the primary criterion as “the Holy Spirit making the Christ event into a saving action.”¹²⁰ In other words, the essence of the proclaimed gospel includes the liberating and renewing presence and work of God, which is enfleshed in different forms and structures of historical existence in church history. Their understanding of this relationship between the gospel and freedom is particularly telling and challenging:

Lutherans and Catholics alike are convinced that the gospel is the foundation of Christian freedom. In the New Testament this freedom is described as freedom from sin, freedom from the power of the law, freedom from death and freedom for service toward God and neighbour. Since, however, Christian freedom is linked to the witness of the gospel, it needs institutional forms for its mediation. The church must therefore understand and actualise itself as institution of freedom. Structures which violate this freedom cannot be legitimate in the church of Christ.¹²¹

Directing this truth to the papal office, it raises the question as to what extent, if any, the person and work of the pope has rightly testified to the liberating gospel. While diverging structures of ministry continue to challenge different churches, the primary criterion of legitimacy rests with the extent to which these respective forms reflect the ethos of the proclaimed gospel. The papacy as an ecclesiastical structure

¹¹⁹ Ibid., §18.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., §30.

is potentially - not necessarily – a mediating institutional form of the gospel and freedom. It can potentially provide a legitimate service to God and neighbour.¹²²

In the second place, and building on the first point, it draws attention to the demand for accountability and reform in the Petrine office. There is no prevailing structure of the church in either communion that is without its imperfections. The papacy has undoubtedly violated this gospel freedom that the participants employ in their remarks on legitimacy. Lutherans and other churches are painfully aware of a vast array of problems vis-à-vis the papacy as it presently exists, such as the manner in which it relates to the laity, or in its position on women's ordination to the ministerial priesthood, or concerning its claims of infallibility and necessity for true ecclesiality. Popes, such as Paul VI and John Paul II, are apt cases in point of leaders who have been cognisant of various problems and weaknesses associated with their particular office of ministry.

The participants' employment of the gospel ideal, therefore, potentially opens the papal office as a structure that, in its historical existence and practice, should always be accountable to the gospel attestation and open to freedom and transformation "as a visible sign of the unity of the churches ... insofar as it is subordinated to the primacy of the gospel by theological reinterpretation and practical restructuring."¹²³ The participants, on this matter, are deeply concerned with the limited effectiveness of the church in embodying and reflecting the proclaimed gospel in the world, which they explain as possibly arising from the church's traditional preoccupation with static organisational patterns and forms that are often harmful in society.

For this reason, they assert: "A vast transformation is needed for our churches to become communities which provide the appropriate institutional and spiritual conditions for the concrete actualisation of true freedom, human dignity and unity among their members."¹²⁴ Moreover, "the necessity of new structures for our churches"¹²⁵ provides new ecumenical possibilities for ministry in the world. In this regard, Lutherans have much to offer the dialogue as those primarily concerned with

¹²² Cf. *Ibid.*, §32.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, §66.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, §45.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, §46.

the integrity, authority, and witness of the proclaimed gospel in the church and world.

6.4.2.2. On the rediscovery and affirmation of Luther and the Lutheran and Roman Catholic traditions

In the second phase of discussions, the participants honour Luther “as a witness to the gospel, a teacher in the faith, and a herald of spiritual renewal,”¹²⁶ emerging from a renewed study and appreciation of Luther in recent decades. Pope John Paul II hailed the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg confession in 1980, a confession inseparable from Luther as person and theologian, as reflecting “a full accord on fundamental and central truths.”¹²⁷ The participants point out that Luther’s intention was not to divide the church, but to reform it. He “believed that his protests were in conformity with the teaching of the church and, indeed, even defended that teaching”,¹²⁸ given the Reformer’s position that the Reformation reflected an “ecumenical purpose and catholic intention”.¹²⁹ What led to increasing conflict between Luther and the Roman church rested with “questions of church authority and ... political power.”¹³⁰

The participants offer a helpful attempt to re-read Luther, the Reformation, as well as the contemporary Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions. They highlight both strengths and weaknesses in each of these components,¹³¹ and seek to draw much attention to the common ground, concerns, and gifts shared by both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. The ecumenical import of these provisions for furthering the Petrine dialogue is that it affirms the noble intentions and shared concerns and values of these traditions as a crucial framework for engaging both

¹²⁶ FR 1983, §4.

¹²⁷ Ibid., cf. §5.

¹²⁸ Ibid., §13.

¹²⁹ FR 1980, §7.

¹³⁰ FR 1983, §13. The report proceeds: “It was not Luther’s understanding of the gospel by itself which brought about conflict and schism in the church, but rather the ecclesial and political concomitants of the Reformation movement” (§13). As “the conflict turned more and more on the question of final authority in matters of faith,” he “appealed to scripture in this dispute, and came to doubt that all doctrinal decisions of the popes and councils were binding in conscience” (§14). With tension inevitably setting in, Luther’s polemical attitude led to him rejecting the pope as “Antichrist” (§15). The rest is history.

¹³¹ Cf. Ibid., §§20-21, §26.

Roman Catholics and Lutherans in contributing to the future shape and role of the papal office. Lutherans may become increasingly convinced of the role of the papal office in preserving and enhancing the church's catholicity, while Roman Catholics may become increasingly convinced of the role other churches could fulfill in addressing the reform of the Petrine office, with both seeking the fulfillment of these roles in a situation of mutual trust and witness to the proclaimed gospel.

6.4.2.3. On the missiological nature and orientation of ministry

In the second phase of discussions, the participants focus also on the problem of ministry, with special reference to the episcopate. They highlight right at the outset the matter of the papal office and aim to explore "the place, the significance, and the problem of the Petrine office."¹³² They succeed in setting the question of the ordained ministry in its missiological framework as a necessary starting point from which to consider traditional disputes between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. They posit: "The special ministry and the other manifold ministries in the church take shape according to existing historical structures and thus respond to the respective missionary needs of the church",¹³³ which implies, therefore, that "while the existence of a special ministry is abidingly constitutive for the church, its concrete form must always remain open to new actualisations."¹³⁴

In line with the missiological nature and orientation of the church's ministries, the participants provide a resourceful framework for potentially understanding and envisioning the nature and role of the Petrine office. They call attention to what should be reflected as the essential character and orientation of the papal office, along with the inevitable demand for modification in how it is historically exercised accordingly.

In this regard, they note that its legitimacy, effectiveness, and authority are intimately bound up with its subordination "to the one ministry of Christ",¹³⁵ given

¹³² FR 1981, §3.

¹³³ Ibid., §18.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., §21.

that ministry “makes present the mission of Jesus Christ”.¹³⁶ Since it is Christ who, through the Spirit, “is acting in the preaching of the Word of God, in the administration of the sacraments, and in the pastoral service”,¹³⁷ the participants assert: “Following the example of Jesus Christ, the ministry in the church cannot claim any worldly advantages, but must rather be characterised by radical obedience and service.”¹³⁸

Furthermore, since “the individual local congregation cannot be thought of as isolated and autonomous when it comes to the conferring of the ministerial office”,¹³⁹ ministry signifies a service in and for the community,¹⁴⁰ and *ipso facto* “should involve the participation of the whole community” in conciliar, collegial and synodal expression,¹⁴¹ as well as including the contribution of both women and men as the people of God.¹⁴² In the light of these remarks, Lutherans will raise serious reservations regarding the present state and exercise of the papal office, but could potentially be motivated to featuring as role models for a more credible office of ministry on these concerns.

The participants, therefore, contribute to the Petrine dialogue in at least two ways. In the first place, they indirectly position the Petrine office and ministry within a missiological framework, which draws attention to what its nature and orientation should be in the church. This implies, *inter alia*, that the papal office be measured against missiological criteria, i.e. discerning to what extent it contributes to the church’s missiological commitments. In the second place, they refer to the nature of ministry as a communal and collegial service, which indirectly draws attention to the envisaged character of the Petrine ministry through the papal office. Given the importance for Lutherans of the proclaimed gospel in mission, their openness to the Petrine office as a possible service of mission can potentially be engaged through an active and critical participation in the dialogue on the papal office.

¹³⁶ Ibid., §20.

¹³⁷ Ibid., §21.

¹³⁸ Ibid., §22.

¹³⁹ Ibid., §38.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., §34.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., §24.

¹⁴² Ibid., §25.

6.4.2.4. On the value of a wider episcopal ministry

In the second phase of discussions, the participants refer to a significant measure of convergence in their churches vis-à-vis the character of ecclesial practice, where in “both churches there are local congregational ministries (priest, pastor) as well as also superordinated regional ministries.”¹⁴³ The common character of these latter ministries is described as having “the function of pastoral supervision and of service of unity within a larger area”,¹⁴⁴ which “are connected with the commission to preach, administer the sacraments and lead the congregation, and involve teaching and doctrinal discipline, ordination, supervision, [and] church order”.¹⁴⁵

This content of the episcopal ministry coincides directly with the nature and role of the Petrine ministry as a service of leadership and oversight. Since Lutherans and Roman Catholics both share a rich episcopal character in their ordained ministries of leadership, a strategic place is available in Lutheran Christianity for a potential positioning of the papal office. Lutherans recognise the indispensability of the episcopal ministry “for historical unity and continuity”,¹⁴⁶ and therefore are intent upon the continued place and new structuring of *episcopate*.¹⁴⁷ It is in this area that major progress in agreement has been achieved,¹⁴⁸ which aids Lutherans in contributing to the dialogue on the papal office as potentially such an episcopal ministry of leadership, oversight, unity, and continuity.

6.4.2.5. On the preservation of the purity of the gospel

In the second phase of discussions, the participants also highlight the high view of the teaching ministry for both communions. At stake for Lutherans is “the task of watching over the purity of the gospel”¹⁴⁹ which is also held in high esteem by

¹⁴³ Ibid., §44.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., §47.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid., §49: “If both churches acknowledge that for faith this historical development of the one apostolic ministry into a more local and a more regional ministry has taken place with the help of the Holy Spirit and to this degree constitutes something essential for the church, then a *high degree of agreement* has been reached.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., §53.

Roman Catholics,¹⁵⁰ where both churches are aware of the various controversies that may easily threaten and jeopardise the unity of faith in the church. In either church there “exists a teaching responsibility at a supracongregational level”¹⁵¹ performed in different ways: For Lutherans it rests with synods and other church authorities;¹⁵² for Roman Catholics it rests with the Bishop of Rome and the College of Bishops.¹⁵³

Understanding the nature and role of the teaching ministry in the church in the light of ongoing threats to the purity of the proclaimed gospel places longstanding notions of infallibility and binding authority in a new light, as “Lutheran churches are therefore confronted with the need to rethink the problem of the teaching office and the teaching authority.”¹⁵⁴ For instance, in regard to the claims to authority and infallibility by the pope, it becomes potentially more understandable and appreciated when linked to the defence of the faith, notwithstanding the ongoing related Lutheran reservations and concerns.¹⁵⁵

6.4.2.6. On the fulfillment of the ecumenical vision through the diverse gifts in the church

In the second phase of discussions in their earnest striving for visible unity, the dialogue partners underline the need for a “common vision”¹⁵⁶ to guide their ecumenical efforts toward the goal of unity.¹⁵⁷ Concerned with how the vision could become a reality, they strive “for clarity regarding the nature of church unity and a concept of that goal which implies neither absorption nor return, but a structured fellowship of churches”,¹⁵⁸ since “the full realisation of unity given in Christ and promised by him calls for concrete forms of ecclesial life in common.”¹⁵⁹ This unity,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., §50.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., §57.

¹⁵² Ibid., §55.

¹⁵³ Ibid., §52.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §56. Cf. §§57-58: In both churches, teaching responsibility is tied to the whole church's witness to the faith. Both churches know that their norm is the gospel. Both churches are faced by the question of the nature and the binding character of doctrinal decisions. ... The church's abiding in the truth should not be understood in a static way, but as a dynamic event which takes place with the aid of the Holy Spirit in ceaseless battle against error and sin in the church as well as in the world.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. FR 1993, §§194ff.

¹⁵⁶ FR 1980-a, §2.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ FR 1985, Preface.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., §1.

they state, is accessible through gifts that God has entrusted to the church, through which the scattered flock are led.¹⁶⁰

The participants describe several models of church fellowship.¹⁶¹ On the possibility of church fellowship between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, they underline the demand for a unity in diversity. Differences in either church should not be fused or surrendered; instead they “should work through divergences to the point where they lose their church-divisive character.”¹⁶² The churches are called to exist in the inevitable tension of unity and diversity, which demands an ongoing regard for inclusivity in its faith, life and ministry.

Diversities be they diversities of church traditions or diversities caused by specific historic, ethnic and cultural contexts – can be understood and lived as different forms of expressing the one and same faith when they are “related to the central message of salvation and Christian faith” and do not endanger this centre, and when they are therefore sustained by one and the same gospel.¹⁶³

This affirms the contribution either church potentially makes in the expression of the one faith, united in their mutual submission to the gospel. For a proper understanding of structural fellowship between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, therefore, this does not imply “that each church adopt the specific forms of belief, piety or ethics of the other church and make them its own. But each church must recognise them as specific and legitimate forms of the one, common Christian faith.”¹⁶⁴ Moreover, they state:

The dialogue between our churches and, in general, ecumenical efforts for visible unity of the church have shown that the structured form needed for full and binding fellowship between churches can [indeed] be manifold and variable. It is not limited to the hierarchical dimension of the church but rather embraces the service of the whole people of God, includes the charisma of all the faithful, and expresses itself in synodal structures and processes. At the same time, fellowship in the ordained ministry forms an essential part of the structured church fellowship.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ FR 1980-a, §7.

¹⁶¹ FR 1985, §§8-45.

¹⁶² Ibid., §47.

¹⁶³ Ibid., §63.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.; cf. §69.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., §92.

These remarks are of significance for a potential engagement of Lutherans in the Petrine dialogue. In the first place, they draw attention to the need for concrete forms of ministries for potentially realising the ecumenical vision. In this way, they indirectly incorporate the papal office as possibly such a ministry that might contribute to the church's unity as a gift of God to the church at large. Roman Catholics readily affirm this role of the papacy, while Lutherans should be mindful of the possible relationship between Protestant fragmentation and the absence of a formal Petrine office.

In the second place, the participants underline the legitimacy and merits of diverse forms of ministries for realising this ecumenical ideal. In this way, they not only challenge Lutherans to potentially recognise the legitimacy of the papal office as one such diverse form, but also confront Roman Catholics with the possible legitimacy of the churches and forms of ministries within the Lutheran tradition that do not adhere to any formal communion with the Bishop of Rome.¹⁶⁶

6.4.3. Concluding Remarks

The papacy still poses critical problems for Lutheran churches, but the important grounds of convergence between the two communions should be acknowledged. The Lutheran tradition has much to offer the new dialogue on the Petrine office. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of the Proclaimed Gospel, the case for Lutheran participation and reception could be significantly served.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. FR 1993, §106.

CHAPTER 7

ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE MINISTRY OF DISPERSED AUTHORITY

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2003, Rowan Williams was enthroned as the new Archbishop of Canterbury for the Anglican Communion in a ceremony in London at which PCPCU president Cardinal Walter Kasper was present. A day later, Kasper presented the Archbishop with a special message from Pope John Paul II and the gift of a pectoral cross.¹ A few months later in May, as both participated in a conference on ecumenism in England at which questions were raised around issues of division between the two communions, *a fortiori* the matter of the Vatican's non-recognition of Anglican orders, Kasper not only underlined the Roman Catholic acceptance that the Holy Spirit was at work in other churches through their official ministers, but also emphasised that the Archbishop of Canterbury is not treated as a layperson in the presence of the pope.² He also drew attention to the pectoral cross that had been presented to Williams several months earlier as "a symbol that means something".³

At the invitation of the pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury met with Pope John Paul II in October 2003 in his first papal audience since becoming leader of the Anglican Communion, where he "gave the Pope a Canterbury Cross and a heavy tome of Anglican spiritual writings, and received from him one of the first pectoral crosses forged to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of John Paul II's election, as well as a bronze relief depicting the Last Supper."⁴ At the meeting the pope expressed gratitude for the progress between Roman Catholics and Anglicans in recent decades, but also noted the "new and serious difficulties [that] have arisen on the path to

¹ See "A radical spiritual message from Canterbury" in *The Tablet* (8 March 2003), 29.

² See "Double act" in *The Tablet* (24 May 2003), 13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See "Warnings and warmth for Rowan Williams" in *The Tablet* (11 October 2003), 23.

unity”.⁵ The Archbishop expressed similar appreciation for the shared ecumenical journey between the two communions, praying that their shared communion might be deepened, and then drew specific attention to the office of the pope:

Over the last twenty-five years, your pontificate has been a source of strength to countless Christians, and both within and beyond the family of the Roman Catholic Church. Your invitation to Church leaders and theologians to engage with you in a patient and fraternal dialogue about the Petrine ministry is a sign of generosity and openness, and I will be glad to participate in reflection on the possible sharing of a Primacy of love and service.⁶

These accounts reveal a new and maturing era in ecumenical relations between Rome and Canterbury, especially on the subject of the Petrine office and its ministry. In his first speech to Parliament four centuries earlier, King James I stated: “I acknowledge the Roman church to be our mother church, although defiled with some infirmities and corruptions.”⁷ This basic remark would come to represent the fundamental tension between Canterbury and Rome in the ensuing centuries: on the one hand, the affirmation of Rome as fulfilling a special place and role in relation to Anglican Christianity, thus underlining the due precedence to be given to the Roman church; on the other hand, the prevailing problematic aspects within the Roman church, potentially nullifying the practice of the aforementioned sentiments.⁸ According to

⁵ See “Archbishop of Canterbury’s greeting to Pope John Paul II”, at Anglican Communion News Service [ACNS3607], acnslst@anglicancommunion.org. Accessed 06/10/2003. Cf. “Warnings and warmth for Rowan Williams”, *The Tablet*, 23. In mind here are such issues as the Anglican acceptance of women’s ordination to the ministerial priesthood and the crisis of authority within the Communion discernible in the controversy around human sexuality and the ordination of a homosexual bishop in North America.

⁶ “Archbishop of Canterbury’s greeting to Pope John Paul II”, Anglican Communion News Service, 1-2.

⁷ Cited in Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Resources in Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 25.

⁸ For a cursory but resourceful historical overview of Anglican disregard for the papacy, see the following: J. Robert Wright, “Anglicans and the Papacy” in Peter J. McCord (Ed.), *A Pope for All Christians? An Inquiry into the Role of Peter in the Modern Church* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 176-193; John Hind, “Primacy and Unity: An Anglican Contribution to a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue” in James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: “Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue”. A Symposium Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 38-43. Hind suggests that Anglican attitudes broadly fall into two categories: “those for whom the papacy was a hopelessly flawed institution, some of them going so far as to describe the pope as antichrist. The second group saw the papacy as a corrupted but reformable institution”. See Hind, “Primacy and Unity” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 38.

Paul Avis in his review of Anglican origins in reference to Rome, the lens of fiery controversy was concentrated directly on the papacy and its power claims.⁹

This notwithstanding, the door to possible reconciliation was left open to Rome insofar as reform of the papal structure was concerned. The same King James I who underlined his concerns with Rome, elsewhere indicated his willingness to respect the primacy of Rome if these corruptions were amended.¹⁰ The past four decades of renewed dialogue and encounter in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations around the areas of doctrine and ecclesiastical life and structures, with special attention to the Petrine ministry, are noteworthy signs that the path towards recognition conceded by the English Reformers is closer than before.

This chapter explores the ways in which the Petrine office is treated within the ecumenical discourse between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. In the broader Christian communion, Anglican Christianity is positioned nearest to the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the recognition of the Petrine office. This notwithstanding, Anglicans reveal both a veritable respect as well as a sustained reservation vis-à-vis the claims and character of the papacy as it presently exists, with special attention given to the nature and practice of its authority in the church.¹¹

7.2. THE NATURE OF ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY

The Anglican Communion as a worldwide fellowship of churches in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury first emerged as a state church, the Church of England,

⁹ Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, 24. The English Reformers' quarrel was not with doctrine in general, but with the reform of church life and structures. It rested not with "the great mass of faithful misguided followers of the hierarchy", but with "the doctrinal and canonical authority of the papacy". Embedded in the Thirty-nine Articles was their categorical position of the pope: "The bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England." Their church was "independent of the papacy and had its own ministry and martyrs". See *Ibid.*, 24-25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ The challenge of authority for both communions is neatly laid out in Adelbert Denaux, "Authority in the Church: A Challenge for both Anglicans and Roman Catholics" in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (April 2001), 1-10. See also Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority in a Divided Church: On the Crisis of Anglican Identity" in *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 23-50; Cormac Murphy O'Connor, "The Question of Authority" in *Origins*, Vol. 32, No. 22 (November 7, 2002), 358-364; Stephen W. Sykes, "The Papacy and Power: An Anglican Perspective" in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 59-75.

during the sixteenth-century Reformation.¹² It was during the reign of King Henry VIII that it chose a separate path to the Roman church in defiance of the pope and became an autonomous church (1533-1534).¹³ While outwardly very little changed, “the principle of autonomy was an explosive force which led to more profound and extensive changes.”¹⁴ These changes related more and more to Protestant ways over time, with Canterbury becoming increasingly distinct from Rome around the question of authority.

The distinctiveness of Anglicanism in relation to both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, according to Stephen Sykes, rests with the question of authority and its exercise in the church. Compared with the Protestant family, “the Church of England never acquired any confessional text comparable to those of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches or to the decrees of the Council of Trent”,¹⁵ although it came to “produce a group of documents, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion (1571), the Book of Common Prayer (1562), and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons (1550), which contain important teaching and are still referred to collectively as its ‘inheritance of faith’.”¹⁶ Given its “rejection of the jurisdictional claims of the papacy, the translation and distribution of the bible into English, and the preaching of the doctrine of justification by faith, the Church of England appeared to be simply a national Protestant church”,¹⁷ yet in reality there were important differences between the Protestant churches and the Church of England that progressively emerged.

Compared with Roman Catholicism, “the Church of England did not develop an authoritative, contemporary teaching body, comparable to the pope and college of

¹² For an insightful overview of important stages in Anglican emergence and identity, see Frederick M. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church Is Ecumenical and What She Is Doing About It* (Franklin: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 148-154; Colin Buchanan, “Anglican Communion” in Nicholas Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 21-24; Alister E. McGrath, “Anglicanism” in Alister McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 3-5; Stephen Sykes, “Anglican thought” in Adrian Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 18-21. Also see C.F. Allison, “Anglican Communion” in Walter A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 62-63; Kevin McDonald, “Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 32-33.

¹³ Buchanan, “Anglican Communion” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁵ Sykes, “Anglican thought” in Hastings (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

bishops in the Catholic Church.”¹⁸ Instead, it asserted “that the church has authority in controversies of faith (Article XXI), provided that its decisions do not contradict scripture, and its bishops are instructed to be vigilant in the correction of error (The Form of Ordaining or Consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop).”¹⁹ In this regard, Anglican thought leaned towards breadth in scope and diversity in method as far as its theological tradition and authority were concerned.

For this reason, as head of the CDF, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, once noted, Anglicanism practices “dispersed authority”.²⁰ While Ratzinger’s remarks served as criticism, the Anglican Communion intentionally favours this notion of authority over a more centralised authority vested with great juridical and positional power. Alister E. McGrath notes that while “Anglicanism was increasingly portrayed as a form of Christianity which brought together Scripture, reason and tradition, where others – it was alleged – gave one element priority over the others”,²¹ there developed “the more justifiable, and distinctively Anglican, notion of ‘dispersed authority’, by which theological and religious authority was understood to be ‘dispersed’ among, for example, Scripture, tradition and the *consensus fidelium*.”²² This methodological emphasis should be kept in mind during the following exploration and assessment of Anglican perspectives on the Petrine office.

7.3. ANGLICAN – ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT

In an insightful article, Andrew Atherstone discusses the relation between ecumenism and Anglicanism. While highlighting the case of the Church of England, in which the lack of unity between Christians is of great concern, he draws attention to the measure of responsibility that could be assumed for this predicament through the Anglican ideal of theological diversity, which involved “the theory of Anglican ‘comprehensiveness’”.²³ In fact, Anglicans have tended to avoid being “tied down

¹⁸ Ibid., 19.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Cited in John L. Allen, Jr., *Cardinal Ratzinger: The Vatican's Enforcer of the Faith* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 229.

²¹ McGrath, “Anglicanism” in McGrath (Ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Andrew Atherstone, “Archbishop Carey’s Ecumenical Vision” in W.M. Jacob (Ed.), *Theology*, Vol. CVI, No. 833 (September/October 2003), 348.

theologically at all”²⁴ for the sake of “the Herculean task of trying to hold together a denomination of remarkable theological breadth which is often riven by partisan disputes.”²⁵ In this regard, Atherstone refers to former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, who maintained not only that Anglican comprehensiveness was ‘to be cherished’,²⁶ but also that it was ‘not a sign of theological weakness but of genuine Christian maturity’.²⁷ In fact, according to Carey, “Anglicanism’s very diversity means that it can act as a ‘catalyst for unity’ between other denominations, helping to interpret different churches to each other.”²⁸

In this light, the history of the Anglican Communion is essentially a drama of managing identity and authority in the midst of great theological diversity.²⁹ Colin Buchanan refers to its “grave questions of unity, identity and calling” by appealing to the lack of central decision-making means, the province-by-province basis by which liturgical revision is carried out, the questioning of traditional sexual and marital norms, and so on. In an ironic sense, the nature of Anglican Christianity revolved around authority in its origins and is presently seeking a renewed understanding of its identity around the very questions of authority.

Progress in present relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics is compounded by the Anglican position on women’s ordination to the ministerial priesthood³⁰ as well as the controversial matter of same-sex unions and the ordination of a homosexual bishop. Also, as Anglicanism internally faces threats to its unity, the question of its ability to maintain communion along with the effectiveness of its instruments to unity has come to the forefront of ecumenical discourse with Roman Catholicism. The nature and role of the papal office is, in this light, of particular relevancy for Anglican exploration.

7.3.1. A Brief Overview

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cf. Ibid., 349.

²⁷ Cf. Ibid., 349-350.

²⁸ Ibid., 350.

²⁹ Cf. Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 148-154; Buchanan, “Anglican Communion” in Lossky et al (Eds), 21-24.

³⁰ See Michael Attridge, “Reflections on Contemporary Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations: Where Do We Go From Here?” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 (1998), 214-217 especially.

The Anglican Communion undoubtedly holds a special place in the thought and life of the Roman Catholic Church. It was already in 1960, before the Second Vatican Council, that Pope John XXIII welcomed Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, to Rome. As Frederick Bliss points out, this meeting occasioned the first time a leader of the sixteenth-century Reformation church visited a pope.³¹

Then, in reference to the Vatican II documents released, the Council singled out the Anglican Communion alone for special mention in the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, which referred to the various communions that had separated from Rome during the Reformation era, but noted: “Among those in which some Catholic traditions and situations continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place”.³² Since the Council, the dialogue between the two churches through the various popes and archbishops of Canterbury have continued in distinctly mature fashion.

Both churches have been in dialogue since the Second Vatican Council at which official Anglican observers were present. In 1966 Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI established the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, which through the recommendations of The Malta Report in 1968, paved the way for a permanent joint commission. Endorsed in 1968 by both the Holy See and the Lambeth Conference, the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was inaugurated.³³

³¹ Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 156.

³² *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism (21 November 1964) in Austin Flannery (Ed.), *Vatican Council II*, Vol. 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Northport: Costello, 1996), (full text 452-470), §13.

³³ For a helpful overview of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues, see the following: Paul Avis, “The Church’s Journey into Truth: A Preface to Further Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Peter Coleman, John Drury and Leslie Houlden (Eds), *Theology*, Vol. LXXXVI, No. 714 (November 1983), 403-411; Michael Richards, “Twenty-Five Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue – where do we go from here?” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (1992), 126-135; J.M.R. Tillard, “Roman Catholics and Anglicans: Is There a Future for Ecumenism?” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (1996), 106-117; Attridge, “Reflections on Contemporary Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations”, *One in Christ*, 212-219; Mary Tanner, “Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations from Malta to Toronto” in *One in Christ*, 114-125; Bliss, *Catholic and Ecumenical*, 156-160; McDonald, “Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 32-35; “Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations,” *Information Service* No. 109 (2002/I-II), 53-57; Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, “The Work of ARCIC 1968-2000” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2004), 23-32; John Hind, “What We Agree in Faith in the Light of the ARCIC *Final Report*” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2004), 33-38; J.M.R. Tillard, “Our Goal: Full and Visible Communion” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 1

The first series of ARCIC meetings during the period 1970-1981 produced reports related to the Eucharist,³⁴ ministry and ordination,³⁵ and authority in the church.³⁶ The last three areas are of immediate relevance to the current discussion. The Final Report of ARCIC I in 1981 noted “substantial agreement” on these matters.³⁷ The second series of discussions during the period 1983-1999 produced reports related to justification³⁸ and the Church as communion (the nature of the church and the ingredients for unity),³⁹ moral vision,⁴⁰ and authority in the church.⁴¹ While each of these reports became ‘agreed statements’, official church responses⁴² identified various strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas requiring further consideration such as papal primacy. Moreover, the process of reception is still some distance away on some of these specific issues of past contention.⁴³

(January 2004), 39-50. See especially “A Survey of Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2004), 7-22.

³⁴ See “Eucharistic Doctrine (Windsor Statement) 1971” in Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (Geneva: WCC, 1984), 68-72; “Elucidation”, 72-77. Hereafter referred to as FR 1971.

³⁵ See “Ministry and Ordination (Canterbury Statement) 1973” and “Elucidation” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 78-84 and 84-87. Hereafter referred to as FR 1973.

³⁶ See “Authority in the Church I (Venice Statement) 1976” and “Elucidation” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 88-99 and 99-105. Hereafter referred to as FR 1976. Also, “Authority in the Church II (Windsor Statement) 1981” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 106-118. Hereafter referred to as FR 1981.

³⁷ See “Final Report 1981” in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 62-67, §2. Hereafter referred to as FR 1981(FR).

³⁸ See “Salvation and the Church” in Jeffrey Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 315-325. Hereafter referred to as FR 1986.

³⁹ See “Church as Communion” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 328-343. Hereafter referred to as FR 1990.

⁴⁰ See “Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church” in Gros et al (Eds), *Growth in Agreement II*, 344-370. Hereafter referred to as FR 1993.

⁴¹ See *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III* (1999). Hereafter referred to as FR 1999. For a selection of responses to this text, see the following: Jon Nilson, “*The Gift of Authority*: An American, Roman Catholic Appreciation” in *One in Christ*, 133-144; John Baycroft, “Understanding The Gift of Authority” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 29, No. 9 (October 2000), 1-4; Denaux, “Authority in the Church, *Ecumenical Trends*, 3-10; Sister Sara Butler, “*The Gift of Authority*: New Steps in Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (June 2001), 1-5; Ruth A. Meyers, “*The Gift of Authority*: New Steps in Anglican/Roman Catholic Relations. An Anglican Response” in *Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (June 2001), 6-10; “Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations,” *Information Service*, 54-55; O’Connor, “The Work of ARCIC 1968-2000”, *One in Christ*, 28ff. See also the response by the South African Anglican Theological Commission, for which I provided the primary draft: “SAATC Response to *The Gift of Authority*” (23 February 2004).

⁴² See, for example, Francis A. Sullivan, “The Vatican Response to ARCIC-I” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (1992), 223-231. For finer remarks on the status of these dialogue texts, see McDonald, “Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue” in Lossky et al (Eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 33-34.

⁴³ Cf. O’Connor, “The Work of ARCIC 1968-2000”, *One in Christ*, 26-27.

The following section considers the various ecumenical dialogue texts of these series in order to ascertain how Anglican and Roman Catholic leaders are treating the Petrine office in recent decades.

7.3.2. Authority in the Church I, 1976

7.3.2.1. Concerning problematic aspects of papal primacy and authority

The Report, while affirming various basic principles of primacy and authority,⁴⁴ concedes to several “particular claims of papal primacy and to its exercise” that pose problems for Anglicans and other churches.⁴⁵ These concerns relate to how claims concerning the Roman see “put a greater weight on the Petrine texts ... than they are generally thought to be able to bear”;⁴⁶ the meaning of the First Vatican Council’s use of ‘divine right’ language for successors of Peter, along with its implication “that as long as a church is not in communion with the bishop of Rome, it is regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as less than fully a church”;⁴⁷ the Anglican difficulty with the claim of papal infallibility;⁴⁸ and the Anglican anxiety concerning the claim of the pope’s possession of universal immediate jurisdiction, which they fear may open the papacy to illegitimate or unchecked use.⁴⁹ These they recognise as warranting urgent and further consideration in the dialogue between Roman Catholics and Anglicans.⁵⁰

7.3.3. Authority in the Church II, 1981

7.3.3.1. Concerning the Petrine texts and the Petrine ministry

The Report gives special attention to the Petrine texts of the New Testament tradition,⁵¹ from which a general picture of the prominent position of Peter among the apostles is discerned in relation to the importance of the bishop of Rome among

⁴⁴ Cf. FR 1976, §§12-23.

⁴⁵ Ibid., §24.

⁴⁶ Ibid., §24(a).

⁴⁷ Ibid., §24(b).

⁴⁸ Ibid., §24(c).

⁴⁹ Ibid., §24(d).

⁵⁰ See especially *Elucidation* (1981): §§1-9, in Meyer and Vischer (Eds), *Growth in Agreement*, 99-105.

⁵¹ FR 1981, §§2-9.

the bishops.⁵² The participants draw attention to the fact that this importance did not reside in Peter's own gifts and character, but on the basis of his calling by Christ as an apostle to provide "a leadership of service ... by helping [the church] to overcome threats to its unity".⁵³ Peter's responsibility for pastoral leadership, however, was never restricted to him, but was shared by the other and future disciples, who shared and would share with Peter a ministerial communion of sorts.⁵⁴

The participants note that while there is "no explicit record of a transmission of Peter's leadership"⁵⁵ within the New Testament, and while "the Petrine texts were subjected to differing interpretations as early as the time of the Church Fathers",⁵⁶ still "the church at Rome, the city in which Peter and Paul taught and were martyred, came to be recognised as possessing a unique responsibility among the churches"⁵⁷ as follows: "its bishop was seen to perform a special service in relation to the unity of the churches, and in relation to fidelity to the apostolic inheritance, thus exercising among his fellow bishops functions analogous to those prescribed to Peter, whose successor the bishop of Rome was claimed to be".⁵⁸ This ministry of unity, the participants maintain, is a service of universal primacy demanded in a reunited church, regardless of the faithful or unfaithful track-record of the Bishop of Rome, who should appropriately, albeit not exclusively, be designated this responsibility.⁵⁹

In this way, the participants draw attention to the prominence of Peter among the apostles in the New Testament, the ministerial calling and ecumenical responsibility of Peter among and in cooperation with the apostles, and the intimate link the early churches identified between the role of Peter and that of the Bishop of Rome. They also point out that the ministry of a universal primacy is essential for a future reunited church.

7.3.3.2. Concerning the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as 'jus divinum'

⁵² Ibid., §2.

⁵³ Ibid., §5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., §4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., §6.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., §9. Cf. §8.

The Report discusses the language of ‘divine right’ as applied by the First Vatican Council to the Roman primacy.⁶⁰ The participants concede that although “there is no universally accepted interpretation of this language, all affirm that it means at least that this primacy expresses God’s purpose for his Church”,⁶¹ and that the universal primate is meant “to be the sign of the visible *koinonia* God wills for the Church and an instrument through which unity in diversity is realised” in collegiality with the bishops and the whole church.⁶² They emphasise, however, that this “doctrine that a universal primacy expresses the will of God does not entail the consequence that a Christian community out of communion with the see of Rome does not belong to the Church of God”,⁶³ on the ground that “Being in canonical communion with the bishop of Rome is not among the necessary elements by which a Christian community is recognised as a church.”⁶⁴

The participants then state that although Anglicans in the past have not shared in such reflection “on the positive significance of the Roman primacy in the life of the universal Church”,⁶⁵ they are cognisant that “from time to time, Anglican theologians have affirmed that, in changed circumstances, it might be possible for the churches of the Anglican Communion to recognise the development of the Roman primacy as a gift of divine providence”.⁶⁶ Given this interpretation, they wonder whether “it is reasonable to ask whether a gap really exists between the assertion of a primacy by divine right (*jure divino*) and the acknowledgement of its emergence by divine providence (*divina providential*).”⁶⁷ Anglicans repudiated the divine right claim in the past because, by implication, it questioned the ecclesial integrity of Anglican churches in a way that “concluded that any reconciliation with Rome would require a repudiation of their past history, life and experience”.⁶⁸

They conclude, therefore, in a more hopeful light:

⁶⁰ Ibid., §§10-15.

⁶¹ Ibid., §11.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., §12.

⁶⁴ Ibid. They point out: “The Second Vatican Council allows it to be said that a church out of communion with the Roman see may lack nothing from the viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church except that it does not belong to the visible manifestation of full Christian communion which is maintained in the Roman Catholic Church”.

⁶⁵ Ibid., §13.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., §14.

In the past, Roman Catholic teaching that the bishop of Rome is universal primate by divine right or law has been regarded by Anglicans as unacceptable. However, we believe that the primacy of the bishop of Rome can be affirmed as part of God's design for the universal *koinonia* in terms which are compatible with both our traditions. Given such a consensus, the language of divine right used by the First Vatican Council need no longer be seen as a matter of disagreement between us.⁶⁹

7.3.3.3. Concerning the papal claim of jurisdiction

The Report focusses attention on the controversial papal claim of jurisdiction,⁷⁰ where it notes that “within the universal *koinonia* and the collegiality of the bishops, the universal primate exercises the jurisdiction necessary for the fulfillment of his functions, the chief of which is to serve the faith and unity of the whole Church.”⁷¹ The participants concede that difficulties, misunderstandings, and concerns “have arisen from the attribution of universal, ordinary and immediate jurisdiction to the bishop of Rome”,⁷² which the Anglicans experience as “a source of anxiety”⁷³ as they “fear, for example, that he could usurp the rights of a metropolitan in his province or of a bishop in his diocese; that a centralised authority might not always understand local conditions or respect legitimate cultural diversity; that rightful freedom of conscience, thought and action could be imperilled.”⁷⁴

In a reflection on the ideal role of universal jurisdiction, the participants underline primacy not as “an autocratic power over the Church but a service in and to the Church which is a communion in faith and charity of local churches.”⁷⁵ In fact, as far as the purpose of the universal primate's jurisdiction is concerned, it “is to enable him to further catholicity as well as unity and to foster and draw together the riches of the diverse traditions of the churches.”⁷⁶ Given these ideals, they draw attention to

⁶⁹ Ibid., §15.

⁷⁰ Ibid., §§16-22.

⁷¹ Ibid., §17.

⁷² Ibid., §18.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., §19.

⁷⁶ Ibid., §21.

various moral limits to its exercise, which “derive from the nature of the Church and of the universal primate’s pastoral office”⁷⁷:

By virtue of his jurisdiction, given for the building up of the Church, the universal primate has the right in special cases to intervene in the affairs of a diocese and to receive appeals from the decision of a diocesan bishop. It is because the universal primate, in collegial association with his fellow bishops, has the task of safeguarding the faith and unity of the universal Church that the diocesan bishop is subject to his authority. ... [Furthermore] ... Collegial and primatial responsibility for preserving the distinctive life of the local churches involves a proper respect for their customs and traditions, provided these do not contradict the faith or disrupt communion. The search for unity and concern for catholicity must not be divorced.⁷⁸

In this way, the participants highlight the expressed purpose of jurisdiction as well as its intended limits for being exercised, in the light of Anglican attitudes and reactions to the papal claim in the past. Notwithstanding the helpfulness of these remarks by the Roman Catholics, there remain still specific questions about its practical application in a future reunited church.⁷⁹

7.3.3.4. Concerning the papal claim of infallibility

The Report addresses the controversial claim of papal infallibility⁸⁰ with special reference to the church’s confidence in the Holy Spirit, who “effectually enable[s] it to fulfill its mission so that it will neither lose its essential character nor fail to reach its goal.”⁸¹ In this regard, they reflect on whether there exists “a special ministerial gift of discerning the truth of teaching bestowed at crucial times on one person to enable him to speak authoritatively in the name of the Church in order to preserve the people of God in the truth.”⁸² Such a judgement for the maintenance of the church in truth, “makes it clear what the truth is, and strengthens the Church’s confidence in proclaiming the Gospel.”⁸³

⁷⁷ Ibid., §20.

⁷⁸ Ibid., §20, §21.

⁷⁹ Ibid., §22.

⁸⁰ Ibid., §§23-32.

⁸¹ Ibid., §23.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., §24.

Given the “various instruments and agencies at various levels” through which the church’s teaching authority is exercised,⁸⁴ the participants recognise “the need in a united Church for a universal primacy who, presiding over the *koinonia*, can speak with authority in the name of the Church”.⁸⁵ They refer to the purpose of this service as not adding to revelatory content, but “to recall and emphasise some important truth; to expound the faith more lucidly; to expose error; to draw out implications not sufficiently recognised; and to show how Christian truth applies to contemporary issues.”⁸⁶ Such a service to preserve the church from error, they declare, “has been performed by the bishop of Rome as universal primate both within and outside the synodal process.”⁸⁷

Anglican anxieties are levelled at the extent of reception by the whole church, as well as the teaching authority of the Bishop of Rome independent of a council, with the Marian dogmas as cases in point.⁸⁸ More frankly, “Anglicans do not accept the guaranteed possession of such a gift of divine assistance in judgement necessarily attached to the office of the bishop of Rome”.⁸⁹ In fact, the participants “agree that, without a special charism guarding the judgement of the universal primate, the Church would still possess means of receiving and ascertaining the truth of revelation”,⁹⁰ which is evidenced “in the acknowledged gifts of grace and truth in churches not in full communion with the Roman see.”⁹¹ Ultimately, they “together affirm that the Church needs both a multiple, dispersed authority, with which all God’s people are actively involved”⁹² as well as “a universal primate as servant and focus of visible unity in truth and love.”⁹³

7.3.4. Church as Communion, 1990

7.3.4.1. Concerning Pope John Paul II and women’s ordination

⁸⁴ Ibid., §26.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., §27.

⁸⁷ Ibid., §29.

⁸⁸ Cf. Ibid., §§29-30.

⁸⁹ Ibid., §31.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., §33.

⁹³ Ibid.

The Report underlines the serious impact the Anglican acceptance of women's ordination to the ministerial priesthood poses to the communion between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The participants refer to a statement by Pope John Paul II to the Archbishop of Canterbury that noted "the Catholic church ... is firmly opposed to this development, viewing it as a break with Tradition of a kind we have no competence to authorise".⁹⁴ Furthermore, regarding the quest by ARCIC for the reconciliation of ministries between the churches, the pope categorically maintained that "the ordination of women to the priesthood in some provinces of the Anglican communion, together with the recognition of the right of individual provinces to proceed with the ordination of women to the episcopacy, appears to pre-empt this study and effectively block the path to mutual recognition of ministries".⁹⁵

7.3.5. Life in Christ, 1993

7.3.5.1. Concerning papal supremacy and the voice of the laity

The Report acknowledges that the break in communion between the churches had much to do with different emphases in its structures of government.⁹⁶ One case in point rests with the supremacy of the pope in relation to the voice of the laity. The participants refer to the inclusion of the laity in structures of government with the clergy within the Anglican Communion, and with the Archbishop of Canterbury being ascribed "a primacy of honour".⁹⁷ In fact, they note how "the Church of England abjured papal supremacy" at the Reformation,⁹⁸ and over time how Anglicanism developed a "network of dispersed authority."⁹⁹ At the same time, the Roman Catholic position of papal authority is noted for its contextual response to challenges and threats by various secular powers around the time of Vatican I.¹⁰⁰

7.3.5.2. Concerning papal authority and moral formation

⁹⁴ Cf. FR 1990, §57.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ FR 1993, §§36-37.

⁹⁷ Ibid., §39.

⁹⁸ Ibid., §38.

⁹⁹ Ibid., §39.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., §§40-41.

The Report refers to how papal authority in the seventeenth century sought to countermand “both rigorism and laxity”¹⁰¹ in moral life in the attempt “to re-establish a vision of the moral life which respected the demands of the gospel while, at the same time, acknowledging the costliness of discipleship and the frailties of the human condition.”¹⁰² In this way, the participants draw attention to the role of the Petrine office in moral formation and moral life, though not without controversy as, for example, Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* makes clear.¹⁰³

7.3.6. Authority in the Church III, 1999

7.3.6.1. Concerning Pope John Paul II’s *Ut Unum Sint* and the insights of ecumenical partners

The Report refers to the fact that in both churches “the exploration of how authority should be exercised at different levels has been open to the perspectives of other churches”.¹⁰⁴ The participants note the importance and value of their ecumenical partners in offering insights and wisdom vis-à-vis these issues.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, they are particularly mindful of the merits of Pope John Paul II’s *Ut Unum Sint* insofar as it invites church leaders and their theologians to engage with him in a patient and fraternal dialogue on the Petrine ministry of unity and how it could be exercised in a new situation.¹⁰⁶

7.3.6.2. Concerning the Bishop of Rome and synodality

The Report underlines the value of synodality, which draws attention to the value of exercising authority in communion.¹⁰⁷ In this regard, the participants refer to the “growing awareness by both local bishops and the Bishop of Rome of ways of working together in a stronger communion”,¹⁰⁸ with Pope Paul VI’s institution of “the Synod of Bishops to deal with issues concerning the Church’s mission throughout the world”

¹⁰¹ Ibid., §44.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ibid., §80.

¹⁰⁴ FR 1999, §4.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., §§34-40.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., §40.

as a noteworthy case in point.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the participants understand the promotion of “the active participation of lay persons in the life and mission of the local church” as complementing collegial synodality.¹¹⁰ In this way, the participants highlight the commitment within Roman Catholicism to contribute towards a more synodal and collaborative papal office concerning its exercise of authority in the church.

7.3.6.3. Concerning the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as a gift

The Report refers to the positive contribution expected of the Bishop of Rome historically – “either for the benefit of the whole Church, as when Leo contributed to the Council of Chalcedon, or for the benefit of a local church, as when Gregory the Great supported Augustine of Canterbury’s mission and ordering of the English church.”¹¹¹ In this regard, the participants underline this role as a welcomed gift, notwithstanding the prevailing historical difficulties and misunderstandings associated with the universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome.¹¹² They affirm that the universal primacy be received by all the churches as a gift.¹¹³

7.3.6.4. Concerning the fragility and reform of the Petrine office

The Report takes cognisance of the fragility that marks those ministers God provides the church with to sustain its life, which “is no less true of the ministry of Peter” as well as the Petrine minister.¹¹⁴ In this regard, the participants refer to Pope John Paul II’s *Ut Unum Sint*, which drew attention to the limitations and weaknesses of the pope and his office, as Pope John Paul II admitted:

I carry out this duty with the profound conviction that I am obeying the Lord, and with a clear sense of my own frailty. Indeed, if Christ himself gave Peter this special mission in the Church and exhorted him to strengthen his brethren, he also made clear to him his human weakness and his special need of conversion.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., §46.

¹¹² Ibid., §47.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., §48.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Ibid.

For this reason, therefore, the participants concede that “Human weakness and sin do not only affect individual ministers: they can distort the human structuring of authority”,¹¹⁶ which paves the way for the need of “loyal criticism and reforms” vis-à-vis the Petrine office.¹¹⁷ In plain fashion, they assert: “The consciousness of human frailty in the exercise of authority ensures that Christian ministers remain open to criticism and renewal and above all to exercising authority according to the example and mind of Christ.”¹¹⁸ In this way, the participants emphasise the imperfections of the Petrine minister and, *ipso facto* the demand for loyal criticism and reform by Anglicans and other churches.

7.3.6.5. Concerning priorities facing Roman Catholics regarding the future exercise of the Petrine office

The Report raises several questions of concern vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic doctrine and practice of the papal office. These include the extent to which collegiality, lay involvement, subsidiarity, communality, and the diversity of theological opinion, are taken into account in the practice of the Petrine ministry through the Bishop of Rome in the church at present.¹¹⁹ Above all, the participants ponder how the question of universal primacy in relation to the Petrine dialogue will develop.¹²⁰ They conclude their discussion with various proposals of a practical nature for a more acceptable primacy.¹²¹

7.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE ANGLICAN – ROMAN CATHOLIC DISCOURSE AND RELATIONS

As Michael Attridge rightly notes, “the last thirty years of relations between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church have indeed been punctuated by significant steps towards fuller ecclesial unity, steps which must be strengthened and built upon in our next stages of dialogue.”¹²² Yet, “At the same time, there have been disagreements which have arisen that have clearly made the journey more

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., §57.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Cf. Ibid., §§60-62.

¹²² Attridge, “Reflections on Contemporary Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations”, *One in Christ*, 219.

difficult than was expected at the beginning.”¹²³ For this reason, he contends: “We must be honest with ourselves and with the other Churches and not become blind to these problems. Christ is not calling us to some sort of ‘second-rate’ unity.”¹²⁴

In the following section, some remarks are offered regarding the problem and promise of the Petrine office for the Anglican tradition. At the heart of their stuckness and hope in the ecumenical sojourn are ecclesiological questions. According to J.M.R. Tillard, the future of ecumenism between Roman Catholics and Anglicans rests with their call “to discover a new chapter in the ecclesiology of the Church as *koinonia*, a quite important and essential chapter.”¹²⁵ Its importance cannot be stressed enough, given especially the stereotypical perception that Anglicanism tends to make “a virtue of ‘untidy’ theology or [takes] refuge behind ambiguous proclamations”.¹²⁶

7.4.1. Signs of Stuckness

The preceding survey of Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical texts discloses both theological areas of common ground as well as areas of tension and discontinuity concerning the nature and practice of the Petrine office in the light of Anglican ecclesiological perspectives, especially vis-à-vis the Anglican ideal of theological comprehensiveness and dispersed authority. Anglicans are mindful of the particular claims of papal primacy and its exercise that are problematic; reservations around the weight attributed to the Petrine texts and its translatability from Peter to his papal successors; the notion of primacy as divine right; the claim of jurisdiction; the position on infallibility; the standpoint of the pope and his suppression of theological debate on the issue of women’s ordination to the ministerial priesthood; the lopsided attention given to papal authority at the expense of the voice of the laity; the problematic character of some papal encyclicals on moral life; the reality of an inadequate model of synodality in papal practice; and so on.

7.4.1.1. The problem of a centralised ecclesiology

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Tillard, “Roman Catholics and Anglicans”, *One in Christ*, 117.

¹²⁶ Cf. Atherstone, “Archbishop Carey’s Ecumenical Vision” in Jacob (Ed.), *Theology*, 351.

Anglican churches are extremely critical of what may be termed a centralised ecclesiology within Roman Catholicism, in which the Petrine office is embedded. Such an ecclesiology benefits the papal office with a high degree of authority and power, both organisationally and theologically. Given the reality that “possessors of religious authority legitimise their authority by the will of God”¹²⁷ and “claim to speak in the name of God and to formulate divine truths, imposing a particular way of life on people”,¹²⁸ Anglicans are rather cautious and reluctant as far as authority is concerned. Agreeing with Adelbert Denaux, Anglicans would affirm: “Because of the possibility of the abuse of power, obedience towards an authority, religious authorities included, is not as self-evident as it used to be.”¹²⁹ Or, as Ruth A. Meyers concedes, “Fears about authority and the abuse of authority run deep in our ecclesial culture.”¹³⁰

This question of ecclesiastical authority, particularly the authority of the Bishop of Rome, lies at the core of Anglican-Roman Catholic separation and hostility. Reflecting on the division forged during the Reformation era, Denaux refers to the Anglicans’ insistence “that the Pope claimed too much authority”,¹³¹ which then led to an interpretation that “the way that he exercised authority was against the will of God.”¹³² Consequently, “for four centuries, the now divided churches developed their structures of authority separately from each other, and Anglicans lived without the ministry of the Bishop of Rome.”¹³³

Anglican ecclesiology, on the other hand, holds high the practice of dispersed authority, a principle Anglicans believe “to be central to a truly catholic understanding of the Church”¹³⁴ and one that was first articulated at a Lambeth Conference “as a means of distinguishing Anglicans from Roman Catholics”.¹³⁵ John Hind, citing an earlier report of his church, underlines this understanding of authority “as diffused through many media by which God guides the Church and

¹²⁷ Denaux, “Authority in the Church”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 1.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Meyers, “*The Gift of Authority*”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 9.

¹³¹ Denaux, “Authority in the Church”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Hind, “Primacy and Unity” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 50.

¹³⁵ Turner, “Episcopal Authority in a Divided Church”, *Pro Ecclesia*, 38.

protects his people from error.”¹³⁶ For this reason, “A unique and supreme place is occupied by the Bible, accessible to every one of the faithful, together with the apostolic creed and the rule of faith for its interpretation, within the universal communion which Christ intended his Church to be.”¹³⁷

Anglicans are anxious about the authority attributed in the hierarchical ordering of the Roman Catholic Church, *a fortiori* as it relates directly to the office of the Bishop of Rome. In short, authority within Roman Catholic ecclesiology is overly focussed on persons, rather than being dispersed among Scripture, tradition, reason, and people. For this reason, Jon Nilson rightly refers to “the present system of authority in the Roman Catholic Church [that] lacks precisely the kind of safeguards that Anglicans would demand as conditions for accepting a universal primate.”¹³⁸ In this regard, Anglicans bemoan the longstanding papal claims of divine right, infallibility, and universal jurisdiction.

Given various implications that flow also from this basis vis-à-vis the status, involvement, and participation of the clergy and laity, Anglicans continue for the most part in suspicion and reluctance as far as recognition and reception of the Petrine office is concerned. Since the authority and attention rests overwhelmingly with the Bishop of Rome, the integrity of the role of the broader community of believers is compromised and threatened. As C.F. Allison points out, for Anglicans it is the parish with its congregation and rector that represents the basic unit of the church, with both laity and clergy represented on all the significant governing structures.¹³⁹

Anglicans, therefore, typically lament papal weaknesses and inadequacies around the issues of collegiality, subsidiarity, and communality. They contend that this ecclesiological framework does not do theological and organisational justice to the full body of believers since it is far too exclusive. The dispersed authority prided by Anglicans makes for a more representative ecclesiology where clergy and laity and women and men are incorporated in functions of church governance. Authority

¹³⁶ Cf. Hind, “Primacy and Unity” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 50.

¹³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Jon Nilson, “*The Gift of Authority*”, *One in Christ*, 141.

¹³⁹ Allison, “Anglican Communion” in Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 62.

requires the participation of the whole body of believers, not only the active role of the pope. Moreover, the Anglican ecclesiological ideal of “provincial autonomy” is similarly compromised.¹⁴⁰ Since these ideals are apparently lacking or weak within Roman Catholic ecclesiology and the Petrine office, Anglican recognition of and respect for the papal office is seriously hampered.

7.4.1.2. *The problem of an idealistic ecclesiology*

Anglican churches find ongoing difficulty with the acceptability of the papacy because of what could be termed an idealistic ecclesiology. The ecumenical engagement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics is undoubtedly of a distinctly mature nature, with their 1999 agreed statement on authority in the church as a noteworthy case in point, but their call for Anglican reception of the Petrine primacy is still quite ambitious in the light of continuing problems with the claims it makes and how it is exercised in the church at present. Their ecumenical remarks, while persuasive and reasonable, are idealistic in that it presumes a modified papacy – which at present does not exist.

In this regard, Denaux notes: “There is no question then that Anglicans are asked to accept the papal primacy as it now exists. For many Roman Catholics, it is clear that doctrinal dialogues are not enough but that concrete reforms of the Papacy are necessary, before its authority can be accepted by other Christians.”¹⁴¹ Nilson concurs that “the universal primacy which could be offered and accepted is *not* the papal primacy that now exists”,¹⁴² but one envisaged through reform – “a primacy ‘exercised in collegiality and synodality – a ministry of *servus servorum Dei*... This primacy will preserve the legitimate diversity of traditions, encourage the Churches in their mission, helping the Church to be an authentic *koinonia*”.¹⁴³ It “will promote the common good, offer a distinctive teaching ministry yet will welcome and protect theological inquiry and foster consultation and discussion in the Church”.¹⁴⁴ Unless Anglicans discern movement on the part of the Petrine office in this direction, with

¹⁴⁰ Hind, “Primacy and Unity” in Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church*, 50-51.

¹⁴¹ Denaux, “Authority in the Church”, *Ecumenical Trends*, 8.

¹⁴² Nilson, “*The Gift of Authority*”, 137.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

the insights and ideals of Anglicans taken seriously, Anglicans and Roman Catholics will perpetuate their perennial ecumenical stuckness on the papal question.

7.4.2. Signs of Hope

The earlier survey of ecumenical texts reveals that Anglicans and Roman Catholics do share a significant measure of theological convergence on ministry and the Petrine office. Anglicans can, in this regard, affirm the active role popes have fulfilled concerning moral life and formation; the emphasis Pope John Paul II has placed on ecumenical learning from Anglicans and other Christians; the need for a ministry of primacy and unity; the ideal role of the pope as a gift from God to the churches; the recognition by Pope John Paul II of the fragility of his office and the openness to renewal and reform of the Petrine ministry; and the demand for Roman Catholics to participate in enhancing the acceptability of the papal office for Anglicans, especially in reference to collegiality, lay involvement, subsidiarity, communality, and the diversity of theological opinion.

In the following section several other strategic points of entry are identified that could possibly assist Anglicans and Roman Catholics to further the Petrine dialogue as matters of potential ecumenical import and reception. It is based on the most recent ecumenical document, *The Gift of Authority*, since this text draws on previous texts and insights, and also because it gives considerable attention to the Petrine office in the church and among the churches.

7.4.2.1. On the theological convergence on the nature of authority as a gift from God

In the first and second rounds of discussion, the participants discern a significant degree of convergence on the nature of authority, which is quite noteworthy in the light of the critical role the subject of authority played in the division between Roman Catholics and Anglicans, as well as the continuing uneasiness experienced by Anglicans presently vis-à-vis the papacy. The points of agreement include the following, as summarised by O'Connor:¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ O'Connor, "The Work of ARCIC 1968-2000", *One in Christ*, 28. Cf. FR 1999, §1.

- a) We agree that the spirit of God maintains the people in obedience to the will of the Father. By this action of the Holy Spirit the authority of Jesus Christ the Lord is active in the Church.
- b) There was agreement, or rather a recognition, that because of Baptism and our participation in what is called the *sensus fidelium*, the faith of the people, the laity play an integral part in decision making in the Church.
- c) It was agreed about the complementarity of primacy, i.e. the work of Bishops, and the role of the lay people are elements in the whole oversight of the Church.
- d) It was agreed that there was a need for a universal primacy exercised by the Bishop of Rome as a sign and safeguard of unity within a reunited Church.
- e) It was agreed that this universal primate should exercise his ministry in collegial association with other bishops.
- f) Finally, it was agreed that any understanding of universal primacy and conciliarity does not supplant the exercise of *episkope*, or leadership, - oversight in the local churches.

In this way, the participants provide a resourceful framework and foundation for furthering the dialogue on the papal office. More specifically, they talk about authority in the church as a gift from God that demands to be exercised with integrity and shared in love to contribute towards reconciliation and peace.¹⁴⁶ By positioning the Petrine office, therefore, within this positive paradigm, the participants assist Anglicans in possibly recognising and experiencing the papal office as part of God's divine providence. As John Baycroft rightly notes, this is what the notion of reception involves, where "what is received must be recognised as from God."¹⁴⁷

7.4.2.2. On the forms of primacy in both churches

In the second round of discussions on the gift of authority, the participants refer to how, throughout history, "the synodality of the Church has been served through conciliar, collegial and primatial authority."¹⁴⁸ They then acknowledge that "Forms of primacy exist in both the Anglican Communion and in the churches in communion with the Bishop of Rome."¹⁴⁹ They even underline the primatial ministry exercised by the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁵⁰ This recognition assists the Petrine dialogue as it

¹⁴⁶ FR 1999, §6.

¹⁴⁷ Baycroft, "Understanding The Gift of Authority", *Ecumenical Trends*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ FR 1999, §45.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

recognises the common ground between the churches on primatial ministry as a foundation for exploring the Petrine primacy in reference to the Canterbury primacy. In this regard, either church has insights to share with the other church vis-à-vis the strengths and weaknesses in each respective church's form of primacy. Furthermore, in the pope's acknowledgement of the weaknesses associated with his office,¹⁵¹ this motivates Anglicans to participate in the Petrine dialogue in order to share as well as receive for a more effective primatial ministry.

7.4.2.3. *On the envisaged Petrine office*

In the second round of discussions on the gift of authority, the participants envisage what may be understood as an ideal papacy.¹⁵² Clearly these ideals, such as collegiality, the involvement of the laity in decision-making, and a more approachable papacy, do not reflect the papal office as it is, but rather provides a vision of what it should be.¹⁵³ These ideals are appealing and acceptable to Anglicans in large measure and, therefore, are resourceful for encouraging Anglicans to continue wrestling with Roman Catholics on the future reform of the Petrine office, albeit step-by-step.

7.4.2.4. *On the possibility of Anglican reception of the Petrine ministry of universal primacy*

In the second round of discussions on the gift of authority, the participants challenge Anglicans with the possibility of being open to and desiring "a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome".¹⁵⁴ In this regard, Anglican reception could be guided in the following ways: Strengthening the instruments of synodality within each province of the Anglican Communion (Houses of Bishops, Provincial and General Synods, Primates' Meeting, Anglican Consultative Council, Lambeth Conference, Archbishop of Canterbury); the active participation of laity in the life and mission of the local church; the association of Anglican bishops with Roman Catholic bishops in their *ad limina* visits to Rome; the Bishops of both communions meeting regularly at regional

¹⁵¹ Ibid., §§47-48.

¹⁵² Ibid., passim.

¹⁵³ See especially Ibid., §§60ff, §33.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §62.

and local levels, with their participation in the international meetings of the other; their common witness in matters of faith and morals, or on issues affecting the common good; ‘paired bishops’ (sharing experiences of *episcopate*, mailing lists, etc.); teaching documents serving Anglicans; continued study on proposals for Petrine reform; developing new ecclesial models for exercising authority that would actualise one’s shared convictions more accurately (e.g. safeguards, procedures); openness to other Petrine functions within the Anglican Communion; liturgical inclusion; and so on.¹⁵⁵

7.4.3. Concluding Remarks

Anglicans and Roman Catholics are closer on the subject of the Petrine office than the various Protestant churches are, with Anglicans having progressed well on their ecumenical sojourn. Anglican churches have many insights to share with Roman Catholics on the Petrine ministry of unity and primacy, though serious reservations and concerns about how the papal office is exercised still prevail. To the extent that the Petrine office reflects a ministry of dispersed authority, the case for Anglican participation and reception could be significantly served.

¹⁵⁵ See “SAATC Response to *The Gift of Authority*”.

CHAPTER 8

THE CHURCHES AND THE FUTURE OF THE PETRINE MINISTRY

8.1. SYNOPSIS

This study has considered the following topic: **The papacy as ecumenical challenge: Contemporary Anglican and Protestant perspectives on the Petrine ministry.** It emerged from an awareness of the growing interest in the Petrine office in recent decades by the post-Reformation churches, an interest that attests both to the papacy's significant historical and theological role in the past as well as to its ongoing importance and controversy for contemporary church and society. The study, from the outset, has been cognisant of the papal office as the prevailing ecumenical enigma for these churches in the light of its theological claims and manner of exercise, on the one hand, but also of the fresh examination the Petrine office was receiving by these churches for its potential import as a legitimate and propitious structure of ministry.

In the light of this unfolding awareness, **Chapter 1** identified at least three factors of a contextual, theological, and methodological character, which could be advanced as the axiological backdrop for the emerging turning points in the contemporary church vis-à-vis the papal office. In the first place, the study noted the role that the new context of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) had fulfilled in providing a more favourable milieu for shifting the papacy towards a new ecclesiological framework of communion, towards a greater ecumenical scope, towards a greater public orientation, and towards a more human face. In the second place, the study referred to the role that the Lima document (1982) had fulfilled in providing a noteworthy measure of theological convergence on ministry, which indirectly incorporates the Petrine office onto the ecumenical agenda as a distinctive form of Christian ministry that comprises both problems and opportunities. In the third place, the study underlined the role that the papal encyclical on unity (1995) had fulfilled in

motivating non-Roman Catholic churches to participate in a new dialogue on the future of the Petrine office.

Following these foundational remarks, the study focused on particular ecclesial traditions in the ensuing chapters. **Chapter 2** attended to Evangelical Christianity as a movement of churches and organisations for whom the ethos of the Gospel was paramount as a lens through which to explore their perspectives on the papacy. **Chapter 3** attended to Pentecostal Christianity as the fastest growing tradition for whom the ethos of the Spirit was discernible as a lens through which to explore their perspectives on the papacy. **Chapter 4** attended to Methodist Christianity in which the ethos of the Good was important as a lens through which to assess their perspectives on the papacy. **Chapter 5** attended to Reformed Christianity in which the ethos of the Reforming Word was underlined as a lens through which to understand their perspectives on the papacy. **Chapter 6** attended to Lutheran Christianity in which the ethos of the Proclaimed Gospel was highlighted as a lens through which to consider their perspectives on the papacy. **Chapter 7** attended to Anglican Christianity in which the ethos of Dispersed Authority was emphasised as a lens through which to explore their perspectives on the papacy.

In each of these chapters, a review was conducted for identifying what these churches were saying about the papacy, its past and ongoing problems for the churches, its potential benefits for the churches, and whether a communion with the pope was in mind. Given these tasks, the study was particularly intrigued and concerned with the following question: Could Anglicans and Protestants potentially recognise and accept the Petrine office as a legitimate and propitious dimension of Christian ministry? The following section seeks to offer a response to this question in the light of the overall study.

8.2. THE PAPACY IN CONTEMPORARY ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

8.2.1. The papacy as an ecumenical subject has increasingly received attention among the ecumenical churches in recent decades

The importance of theological reflection on the papal office is discernible in the growing ecumenical coverage it has received in the dialogues of the Anglican and Protestant churches with the Roman Catholic Church.

8.2.1.1. Petrine references

In the first place, the formal dialogues contained papal references to any or all of the following labels: the pope (generally, or by name), papacy, papal office, Petrine office, Petrine ministry, Bishop of Rome, and Holy or Roman see. The references to Peter should also be noted as an important component in the doctrine of the pope. This general reality applies to each of the ecclesial traditions investigated.

8.2.1.2. Petrine frequency

In the second place, these papal references varied from church to church in terms of frequency. For example, among the Evangelicals and Pentecostals, there were very few references, as opposed to the other non-Roman Catholic churches. The latter churches comprise some traditions that contained many references to the papacy, as well as those traditions that contained sections addressing papal issues. On the former, and including the Evangelicals and Pentecostals, very little elaboration occurred.

8.2.1.3. Petrine directness

In the third place, these papal texts among the various dialogues referred to the pope either indirectly, directly, or in both ways. Some traditions such as the Evangelicals and the Pentecostals tended to make several indirect references; for example, they merely referred to a papal document or speech. Others, such as the Lutherans and the Anglicans, tended towards more direct references, where they devoted a number of sections in their final reports to the doctrine and praxis of the papacy.

8.2.1.4. Petrine tone

In the fourth place, these papal texts referred to the pope in terms that are both positive and negative. The dialogue statements revealed how churches are talking more positively and respectfully about the pope and his office, compared to the intensely aggressive and hostile sentiments levelled at the papacy in the past by the non-Roman Catholic churches. In this regard, these churches revealed that they were treating the subject of the papacy in a more open and objective manner. For example, the Methodist, Reformed, and Lutheran churches conceded that their respective founders – Wesley, Calvin, Luther – were not opposed to the papacy per sé, but rather to the manner in which it was being exercised in their particular historical era and context. At the same time, the churches did not pretend that no problematic elements to the papal office still existed, and in this regard consistently highlighted various outstanding issues demanding further treatment and resolution, such as papal primacy, infallibility, authority, and so on.

8.2.2. The ecumenical churches are presently at different stages insofar as their ecumenical participation in the Petrine dialogue and their theological convergence on the Petrine office are concerned

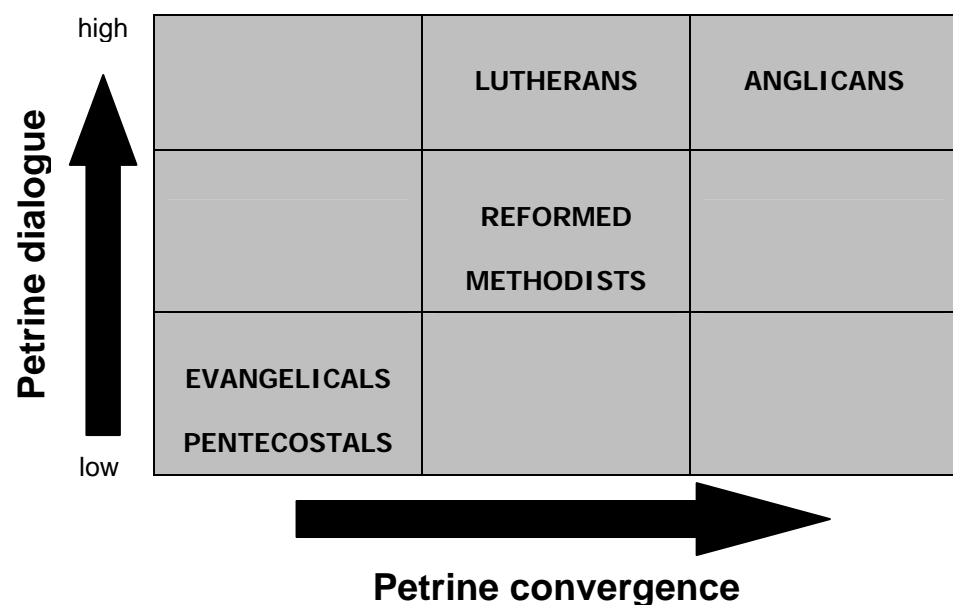


Figure 8.1 Where the churches are at

The ecumenical churches, irrespective of the frequency of their papal references, have identified both problematic and promising aspects of the papal office as it currently exists and functions. This treatment disclosed the experiential ambiguity of the papal office for the ecumenical churches, which draws attention to the experiential imperfections and limitations of the papacy, on the one hand, while also drawing attention to its positive value, on the other hand, which hitherto had been absent among these non-Roman Catholic churches. Moreover, the theological and ecumenical position of the different churches has been informed by specific ecclesiological paradigms and views. In this light, therefore, the different non-Roman Catholic churches have shown themselves to be at different stages vis-à-vis their theological convergence on the Petrine office, and *ipso facto* at different stages concerning their participation in the Petrine dialogue as invited by Pope John Paul II in 1995 (see Figure 8.1).

8.2.2.1. The churches and Petrine convergence

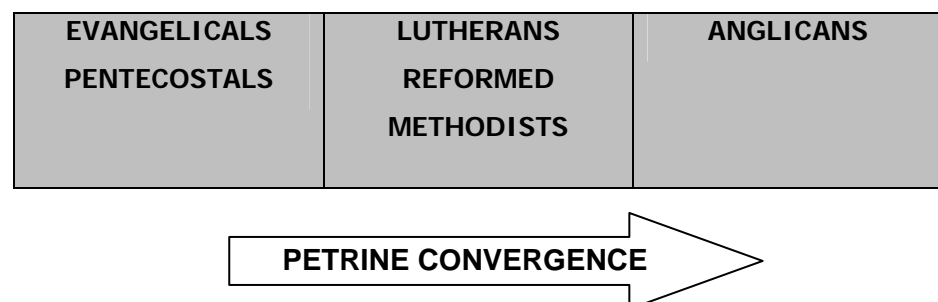


Figure 8.2 The churches and Petrine convergence

Points of disagreement and concern

- (a) The dialogue with the Evangelicals revealed that they continued to struggle with certain aspects of the doctrine and praxis of the papal institution. These include the high interpretive status attributed to the pope as magisterial authority within Roman Catholicism, especially insofar as it involved the claim of infallibility; the existence of some prevailing perplexing teachings of the papacy, such as those that attributed to Mary a distinctive status and role in salvation; the high regard for visible structures, such as the office of the Bishop of Rome, as a bond of

communion in the church; and the perennial concern with the manner of the exercise of the papacy. Implicit here were the broader problems of the ministerial authority of the pope, the relation between Scripture and Tradition within the schema of the papal institution, and the role of the Bishop of Rome in respect of the nature of ecclesiality.

- (b) The dialogue with the Pentecostals revealed that the Pentecostal tradition generally has had little or no regard for the papacy; for this reason, the topic was hardly mentioned in their ecumenical reports. This notwithstanding, the analysis of these texts revealed that Pentecostals continued to struggle with several aspects of the doctrine and praxis of the Petrine office. These included the structural necessity of the bishops and pope for establishing ecclesiality and communion; the existence and maintenance by the pope of such theologically contentious issues as Marian piety; the necessity of episcopal succession, rather than the dynamic of the Holy Spirit; the emphasis on institutional life and visible unity; and other general doctrinal and methodological divergences.
- (c) The dialogue with the Methodists revealed that they experienced ongoing concern with the Petrine office as a stumbling block. These included the nature and authority of the Bishop of Rome and the teaching office; the notion of episcopal succession as normative, rather than symbolic; papal claims of infallibility, jurisdiction and primacy; and the Roman Catholic insistence that communion with the see of Rome was an essential step towards the restoration of Christian unity.
- (d) The dialogue with the Reformed revealed a number of issues about the papal office that perpetuated its problematic character and reception among Reformed churches. These included the claims of papal infallibility and papal centrism; the nature of papal authority; the scandalous track-record of some popes in earlier times; the question of papal primacy as transcending mere honour; the emphasis on episcopacy; and the trust given to personal authority.
- (e) The dialogue with the Lutherans revealed their ongoing reservations regarding the papal office. These included the claim that communion with the Bishop of

Rome was necessary for communion and primacy; the unresolved questions of jurisdictional primacy and papal infallibility; the over-emphasised and centralised authority of the pope; the manner in which the papal office was exercised; the emphasis on papal primacy while the office exists in an unreformed state; the high view of the pope; and the complexity of exegetical and historical conundrums around the papal institution.

- (f) The dialogue with the Anglicans revealed continuing areas of tension and discontinuity concerning the nature and practice of the Petrine office. Anglicans were mindful of the particular claims of papal primacy and its exercise that were problematic; reservations around the weight attributed to the Petrine texts and its translatability from Peter to his papal successors; divine right language; the notion of primacy as divine right; the claim of jurisdiction; the position on infallibility; the standpoint of the pope and his suppression of theological debate on the issue of women's ordination to the ministerial priesthood; the lopsided attention given to papal authority at the expense of the voice of the laity; the problematic character of some papal encyclicals on moral life; and the reality of an inadequate model of synodality in papal practice.

Points of agreement and affirmation

- (a) The dialogue with the Evangelicals revealed that they were increasingly talking about the office and work of the pope in positive terms. They referred to the pope as one who cares deeply about the evangelisation of the modern world; that his theological writings were insightful and resourceful in aiding Evangelicals to find with Roman Catholics theological convergence on mission as well as a new impulse for common witness; that his theological teachings were particularly helpful in better equipping Evangelicals to understand their social and prophetic witness as they wrestled with how to confront the contemporary world with the good news of salvation; that he practised what was preached in the public domain, especially concerning issues of religious freedom and human rights; and that he took seriously the integrity of the Gospel, especially in defending historic Christian teachings against various external threats.

- (b) The dialogue with the Pentecostals revealed a few subtle affirmations vis-à-vis the office and work of the pope. The participants referred to the pope as one who was concerned about the credibility of church practices, such as Marian veneration, and who had taken practical steps in correcting unsound aspects associated with these practices; that the exercise of his office demanded accountability concerning koinonia mutuality or reciprocity; that his papal documents were valuable teaching resources within Roman Catholicism at least; and that mission has rightfully occupied a central place in the teaching and practices of recent popes as attesting to their commitment to common witness.
- (c) The dialogue with the Methodists revealed an affirmation of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI as noteworthy examples of leaders who reflected a model of leadership and authority immersed in love and service; that papal leadership and Wesleyan leadership had been concerned with similar ends of unity and superintendency; that recent popes had reflected a similar Methodist concern and passion for common witness and 'scriptural holiness'; that renewal and reform of church structures such as the papacy was in view; that several creative ways of being in communion with the see of Rome existed; and that the Bishop of Rome fulfilled a personal and propitious ministry of episcopate that could benefit Methodists in a similar way in which Wesley's superintendency model had benefited the churches.
- (d) The dialogue with the Reformed revealed an acknowledgement of the potential legitimacy of a Petrine function of unity; that such popes as Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II had fulfilled a profoundly pastoral and ecumenical role for both churches; that such Reformers as Zwingli and Calvin had received renewed consideration by Roman Catholics as praiseworthy figures; that recent popes had been earnestly concerned with reform in the church; that various issues of contention between the churches, including around the issue of the papal office, were explored as past misunderstandings; that the primacy of the pope could at least be embraced as a primacy of honour; that the doctrine of the papacy was being explored anew by Roman Catholics within an ecclesiology of communion; and that Pope John Paul II had made an important contribution toward ecclesial reconciliation.

- (e) The dialogue with the Lutherans revealed significant areas of convergence and cooperation. Lutherans considered the possibility of the papal office as a Petrine ministry of service to the unity of the church's faith; that the problematic papacy may represent an open question; that Luther conditionally rejected the papacy; and that a need for supra-congregational leadership in the church existed.
- (f) The dialogue with the Anglicans revealed a significant measure of theological convergence on ministry and the Petrine office. Anglicans, in this regard, affirmed the active role popes had fulfilled concerning moral life and formation; the emphasis Pope John Paul II had placed on ecumenical learning from Anglicans and other Christians; the need for a ministry of primacy and unity; the ideal role of the pope as a gift from God to the churches; the recognition by Pope John Paul II of the fragility of his office and the openness to renewal and reform of the Petrine ministry; and the demand for Roman Catholics to participate in enhancing the acceptability of the papal office for Anglicans, especially in reference to collegiality, lay involvement, subsidiarity, communality, and the diversity of theological opinion.

Lima and Petrine convergence (1)

Given that this study has explored how the churches have talked about the papal office in their ecumenical dialogues, several points should be clear that reflect the ideals of ministry as contained in the Lima document (1982).

- (a) Firstly, the papacy is typically discussed as a ministry or service in the church and world, comprising both problematic and promising aspects (ministry).
- (b) Secondly, the papacy is regarded as a structure of ministry about which the churches have a set of shared convictions and perspectives, both positive and negative (convergence).
- (c) Thirdly, the papacy is referred to as a ministry that not only might have something to teach other churches about Christian ministry, but is itself also a distinctive

form of ministry that needs to learn and benefit from the insights and forms of other churches' ministries (objectivity).

- (d) Fourthly, the papacy is underlined as a ministry situated formally within the ordained ministry, which inevitably concurs with the church order of some churches while diverging from the church order of other churches (ordination).
- (e) Fifthly, the papacy is regarded as an episcopal agent, which also concurs with some churches' order while posing problems for others' (threefold pattern).
- (f) Sixthly, the papacy is discussed with reference to its personal, collegial, and communal dimensions and responsibilities, with some churches affirming one or other dimension, and others raising concern on the quality of one or other dimension in the manner of its exercise (threefold exercise).
- (g) Seventhly, the papacy is especially understood as a ministry of supervision that aims to protect and edify the church (episkopè).
- (h) Eighthly, the papacy is discussed as a structure involving much authority, about which the churches have not found consensus as yet (authority).

Lima and Petrine convergence (2)

The abovementioned points of agreement and disagreement are more understandable against the backdrop of the numerous responses by the churches to the Lima text. In this regard, the following remarks by the respective churches should especially be kept well in mind in a reflection on the ecclesiological difficulties associated with the Petrine office.

- (a) Evangelical responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text have been splintered, given the absence of any official ecclesiastical structure that speaks or acts on behalf of Evangelical churches. For this reason, responses could be drawn

from evangelical organisations, such as the WEF's 1989 response,¹ which affirmed the ecumenical intentions and efforts of the Lima theologians, though not without some criticism. The Evangelical response took issue with the following aspects of BEM, that inevitably influences how they would judge the nature of the Petrine ministry: the sacramentalist understanding of the nature of the church; the emphasis on historical tradition as something secondary, rather than the primary focus of the Gospel; the apparent restriction of ministry to the formally ordained; the influence of gender in ordained ministry; the preference for a particular structural form of ministry, as seen in the "threefold ministry" framework; and the preference for episcopacy.

- (b) Pentecostal responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text have not been forthcoming, except for some who have been involved with the WCC and offered some feedback. Terminology like "convergence," "reception," "magisterial," and others need to be explained and clarified for the Pentecostal web of beliefs. Moreover, the methodology employed in BEM constitutes a difficulty for Pentecostal churches, who are certainly not too familiar with such communication processes. Furthermore, Pentecostals are more accustomed to personal testimonies and faith stories as ways to reach common agreement, rather than written statements. Many are suspicious of "creedalism" in this regard. Finally, ecumenism is still an ongoing dilemma for Pentecostals, who adhere to a more spiritual nuance of unity.
- (c) Methodist responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text have been substantial.² The Methodist responses took issue with the following aspects of BEM, that inevitably influences how they would judge the nature of the Petrine ministry: the bias toward the institutional nature of the church's ministry, which

¹ Paul Schrottenboer (Ed.), *An Evangelical Response to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (World Evangelical Fellowship, 1989), at <http://www.bostontheological.org/ecudocs/wef-bem.htm>, 4. Accessed 10/10/2001.

² See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, 207-221, for a resourceful analysis of the various Methodist responses to BEM. For the primary responses of these Methodist Churches, see the following volumes all edited by Max Thurian: *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. I, Faith and Order Paper 129 (Geneva: WCC, 1986), 78-80; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. II, Faith and Order Paper 132 (Geneva: WCC, 1986), 177-244; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. IV, Faith and Order Paper 137 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 166-182; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. VI, Faith and Order Paper 144 (Geneva: WCC, 1988), 131.

they feared might result in an hierarchical model of ministry; reservations about the threefold order of ministry, which might also be misconstrued as a superior form of ministry at the expense of lay involvement; episcopal succession as a condition for mutual recognition of ministries; and the ordination of women as an act that should not be denied in ministry.

- (d) Reformed responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text³ took issue with the following aspects of BEM, which inevitably influences how they would judge the nature of the Petrine ministry: the absence of treatment of difficult questions, such as the pope and the Petrine ministry; the apparent bias towards Roman Catholic ecclesiology; the preference for the threefold church order of ministry, while differing traditions of church order exist within the Reformed family; the status-based nature of the ordained ministry, rather than a functional-based nature; a limited ministry for the laity and women, given the emphasis on a hierarchical format of ministry; and the weight given to apostolic succession, rather than apostolic tradition.
- (e) Lutheran responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text⁴ grapple with the following matters and questions: the fact of a particular function or structure of ministry as being constitutive for the church; the threefold pattern as normative for all churches; too much authority ascribed to ordained ministers; episcopal succession; too much weight given to the ordained ministers, at the expense of the congregation; the notion that a bishop's ministry might differ in quality, rather than merely in function, to other ministers; issues of ordination, episcopal

³ For the primary responses of these Reformed Churches, see the following volumes all edited by Max Thurian: *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. II, Faith and Order Paper 132 (Geneva: WCC, 1986), 141-176; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. III, Faith and Order Paper 135 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 163-167, 183-185, 189-226; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. IV, Faith and Order Paper 137 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 93-109; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. V, Faith and Order Paper 143 (Geneva: WCC, 1988), 161-164.

⁴ For the primary responses of these Lutheran Churches, see the following volumes all edited by Max Thurian: *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. III, Faith and Order Paper 135 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 106-115, 116-127, 128-130, 131-141, 142-144, 145-157, 158-162; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. IV, Faith and Order Paper 137 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 17-20, 21-41, 42-46, 47-56, 57-72, 73-80, 81-92; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. VI, Faith and Order Paper 144 (Geneva: WCC, 1988), 44-49, 50-57; *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text*, Vol. V, Faith and Order Paper 143 (Geneva: WCC, 1988), 18-22, 23-31, 32-68, 69-93, 94-118, 119-160.

succession, hierarchical structure, episcopal authority, and the responsibility of leadership as questions of substance, rather than questions of order; the limitation of church governance to the ordained; women's ordination being repudiated by churches; and the absence of any treatment on the papal office or magisterium.

- (f) Anglican responses to the Ministry section of the Lima text⁵ wrestle with the following matters: the need for more clarity on episkope and episkopos; the nature of authority and its exercise; recognition of ministries in other churches without requiring re-ordination; and the obstacles to women's ordination.

8.2.2.2. The churches and Petrine participation

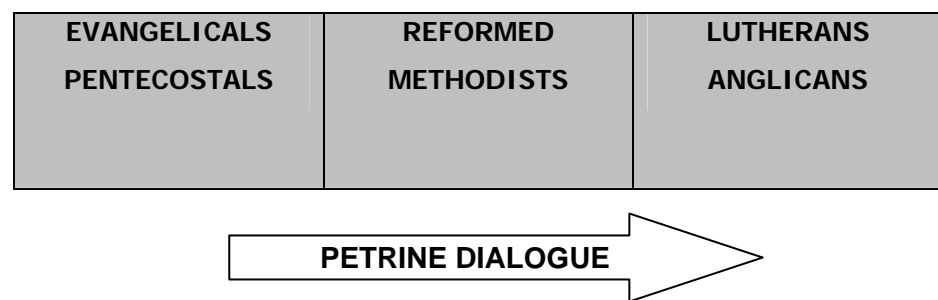


Figure 8.3 The churches and the Petrine dialogue

In November 2001, a draft document was prepared for discussion at the PCPCU Plenary, which represented “an initial step in efforts by the PCPCU to assess the ecumenical discussion of the Petrine Ministry in the light of the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*”.⁶ The PCPCU has coordinated this process, although these church submissions are not yet available for study in the public domain. It should also be noted that the Petrine dialogue is still in its infant stage, as these answers continue to be written, submitted, received, studied, and analysed. Concerning the ecumenical churches’ participation in the dialogue on the papal office as per Pope John Paul II’s invitation,⁷

⁵ For the primary responses of the Anglican Churches, see the following as edited by Max Thurian: *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” text*, Vol. III, Faith and Order Paper 135 (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 100-105.

⁶ See the draft “Petrine Ministry” in *Information Service* 109 (2002/I-II), 29-42.

⁷ See “*Ut Unum Sint*: Responses within Britain and Ireland to Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Unity” in *One in Christ*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4 (1999), 339-378; John R. Quinn, *The*

several points can be advanced vis-à-vis the PCPCU Draft text,⁸ which neatly summarises the Petrine question in ecumenical perspective, as well as assisting this current study in identifying some recommendations requiring future attention and consideration.⁹

- (a) In the first place, the Draft was cognisant of the role that various ecumenical agencies played, whether before or following the encyclical, in exploring the subject of the Petrine office,¹⁰ as it noted: “The most solid and complete theological investigation regarding the ecumenical question of primacy was performed by various joint commissions or dialogues”,¹¹ which had seemingly served as “an effective instrument to progress in this complex and delicate matter.”¹² Moreover, these efforts brought about “fairly complete and well balanced results concerning the nature and exercise of papal primacy”,¹³ which reflected both important convergence on many essential points as well as certain trends.¹⁴ A selection of the dialogues investigated in this study were referred to in their Draft document as representing the primary dialogue statements on the papal question.¹⁵
- (b) In the second place, the Draft underlined the broad spectrum of responses to the Petrine dialogue invitation, including “the Old Catholic Church, Churches of the Anglican Communion, Lutheran Churches, Presbyterian Churches, Reformed Churches and Free Churches.”¹⁶ Moreover, most responses were from North America and Europe, and mostly prepared by institutions or local groups. Ecumenical commissions, local Councils of Churches, and several academic

Reform of the Papacy: The Costly Call to Christian Unity (New York: Crossroad, 1999); James F. Puglisi (Ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: “Toward a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue”* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999); Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Eds), *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

⁸ See also David Carter, “The PCPCU Document on the Petrine Ministry” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (April 2004), 54-66.

⁹ The following article has just been published, and is resourceful for the points raised in this concluding chapter: Peter Lüning, “Universal Episkopé and Papal Ministry: Responses to *Ut Unum Sint*” in *One in Christ*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (October 2004), 24-36.

¹⁰ “Petrine Ministry”, *Information Service*, 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

institutions and ecumenical communities submitted some responses. Then, some answers came through various ecumenical symposia and individual theologians.¹⁷ Unfortunately, these respective reactions could not be incorporated individually in this current study, since these are still in the hands of the PCPCU, thus out of public reach at present.

- (c) In the third place, the Draft acknowledged the positive appraisal of the Petrine invitation, which included the respondents' affirmation of Pope John Paul II's longstanding ecumenical commitment;¹⁸ their appreciation of the encyclical's ecumenical openness and honesty, as well as its basic theological convictions that are largely shared;¹⁹ their support for a Petrine dialogue on the ministry of unity;²⁰ and their special appreciation for the distinction made "between the nature of primacy and the temporal forms in which it is exercised".²¹

The Draft, moreover, draws attention to some basic trends of relevance to the papal discussion as discernible within the pool of non-Roman Catholic responses, which included the following: "a growing awareness of the universal dimension of the Church and the consequent necessity of an appropriate spiritual ministry of leadership at the universal level";²² and reference to "various customary objections to papal authority ... concerning biblical foundation, *de iure divino*, universal jurisdiction, infallibility, and collegiality".²³ These positive and problematic components of the Petrine dialogue have been consistently and repeatedly discussed in this current study. The growing trend towards recognition of the need for and value of a ministry of unity beyond the local church level is also discernible in this study.

- (d) In the fourth place, the Draft highlights the "four fundamental theological questions"²⁴ that are part and parcel of the Petrine dialogue responses. Firstly, there is the Scriptural foundation for the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, which

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

involves discussion around the Petrine texts, the notion of the “Petrine function”, the notion of episcopate at the universal level, and the value of a more biblical and spiritual-oriented exercise of primacy.²⁵ Secondly, there is the “De iure divino” claim.²⁶ Thirdly, there is the position on universal jurisdiction, which involves discussion around the balance between the personal, collegial and communal dimensions of ministry, and the question of authority and power.²⁷ Fourthly, there is the papal infallibility definition, which involves discussion around collegial and teaching authority, as well as teaching authority and reception.²⁸ These theological challenges have surfaced frequently in this current study as ecclesiological problems and opportunities for the non-Roman Catholic churches.

- (e) In the fifth place, the Draft summarises where the churches are at vis-à-vis convergence on papal primacy. It highlights the work of the ARCIC and asserts: “The most far-reaching ecumenical results concerning papal primacy have been achieved with the Anglican Communion”,²⁹ who regard the Bishop of Rome as the most plausible candidate for fulfilling the universal ministry of unity envisaged. Quite telling is the ecumenical paradigm of the Orthodox churches that the Anglicans have in mind concerning communion with the Holy See, where the Orthodox churches share a communion with the Bishop of Rome, even though full agreement has not been attained on papal primacy.³⁰ The PCPCU also lauds the work of the Lutheran tradition.³¹

On other churches, however, the diversity of ecclesiological approaches presents a difficulty for finding a common position regarding papal primacy.³² The PCPCU draws attention to the need for ecumenical study and discussion among the Reformation churches.³³ What is underlined, however, is the development in their thinking and experience on the need for a ministry of unity for the universal church. In fact, these churches have already established “new forms of episcopate

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 32-33.

²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 33-34.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 34-35.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 39.

³² Cf. *Ibid.*

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*

for safeguarding and developing the bonds of unity or collaboration within their own federations or communions, at regional and universal levels.”³⁴ The appealing nature of such a ministry by these churches is further noted, where they “are inclined to engage in such a dialogue with Rome, provided that some basic insights of the Reformation can be admitted or honoured.”³⁵ In this regard, they elaborate:

Important issues from a reformed or protestant perspective are: (1) that the acceptance of a ‘ministry of unity’ cannot be put at the par of a submission to papal ministry in its present doctrinal and juridical appearance; (2) that the bishop of Rome refrains from those prerogatives which made his ministry to become a historical factor of dissension and division; (3) that this ‘ministry of unity’ should be exercised not in a centralised, but in a communal and collegial way; (4) that three basic principles therefore are respected: the principle of legitimate diversity, the principle of collegiality and the principle of subsidiarity; (5) and above all, that this ministry, as any ministry in the Church, should be conceived and perceived as a service to the ‘primacy of the Gospel’, in subordination to the ministry and working of Jesus Christ.³⁶

- (f) In the sixth place, the Draft confronts Roman Catholicism and its programme of papal reform. In this regard, it refers to the suggestion “that Roman primacy should be re-interpreted and re-shaped according to the present necessities of the Church”,³⁷ given that its “concrete exercise ... cannot be determined once and forever.”³⁸ Rather, “It should indeed be re-discovered and developed in response to the ever-changing challenges the Church is confronted with.”³⁹ The churches explored in this current study would agree wholeheartedly with the abovementioned remarks, given their missiological orientation and high regard for the dynamic of the Holy Spirit and the gospel.

8.2.3. The ecumenical churches are saying that while the papacy features as their greatest ecumenical challenge, it can possibly be recognised, in varying degrees among the different ecclesial

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 41.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

traditions, as a legitimate and propitious structure of Christian ministry, though not in its present form and manner of exercise

The new and unprecedented dialogue on the future of the Petrine office, where contemporary Anglican and Protestant churches are in varying degrees conceding to the need for and value of a universal ministry of unity, takes place in “a new climate and context.”⁴⁰ As such, it “should be considered as a precious and fragile advance, to be handled in a delicate and careful way.”⁴¹ The following points are offered as modest suggestions for contributing to the furtherance and deepening of this dialogue on the Petrine ministry:

- (a) On the theological front, the different ecumenical dialogues should continue between Roman Catholics and the other churches, notwithstanding the various challenges that potentially hamper their ecumenical pursuits. Specific attention to the Petrine ministry of unity – both in the papal form as well as other forms – demands careful and ongoing study.
- (b) On the ecclesial front, Anglican and Protestant churches should give careful attention to their respective understandings of the Petrine ministry, as the PCPCU Draft text recommends: “The Plenary first recommends further exegetical and doctrinal studies to be carried out on the essence and exercise of the ‘Petrine ministry’, based on the varied patristic, liturgical and canonical traditions to be found in the Church of the East and the West, across her history.”⁴² The remark is wise, given the tendency to limit consideration of the Petrine ministry as solely involving the Roman Catholic Church and its papal structure. Such a study as suggested could pave the way further for a deeper appreciation for the Petrine ministry, as well as for its papal form.

The Roman Catholic Church, too, bears responsibility on this path. Anglicans and Protestants eagerly want to see how serious the pope was when he invited the churches at large to contribute to the renewal and reform of the papacy. They are certainly concerned at the less-than-ideal character of the Petrine office, as it

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

presently exists, especially in regard to the issues of authority, collegiality, subsidiarity, communality, infallibility, jurisdiction, handling of dissenters, and so on. The fact that a senior Roman Catholic clergyperson such as John R. Quinn,⁴³ who addressed the church on the contours of a reform programme for the papal office, has not appeared to have been well received or taken seriously, does not bode well for the ecumenical churches' confidence in the papal invitation. The churches are presently anticipating evidence of papal reform.

- (c) On the ministerial front, efforts at working together more closely and collaboratively between the papal office and structures of other churches, are awaited. Many proposals are offered by the churches on this front, such as including non-Roman Catholic church representatives in the Curia or incorporating such leaders in future conclaves. To the extent that such proposals materialise, the Petrine office and the ministerial structures of the other churches will be shared among all Christians as part of the ecumenical gift-exchange for which Jesus prayed, "so that the world may believe" (Jn. 17:21).

8.3. CONCLUSION

The ecumenical discussion on the Petrine office is certainly larger than what has been contained within this study. Moreover, its complexity necessitates further and deeper research among ecumenists. Among the values of this current study, however, is its attempt to provide a reasonably comprehensive and serious overview, analysis, and interpretation of how most non-Roman Catholic churches are talking about the papacy in recent decades. The scope of this project, therefore, is a contribution in itself.

The findings of the study should, in this light, offer a resourceful framework for exploring further the dialogue and its particular issues, particularly as far as the goal of reception is concerned. At the very least, it is hoped that churches – irrespective of their position on the Roman Catholic papal institution – recognise the value of and need for a universal ministry of unity, and then commit themselves to a meaningful process in which they explore the nature and role of a Petrine ministry for their

⁴³ Cf. Quinn, *The Reform of the Papacy*, passim.

particular churches. Thereafter, it is necessary that they commit themselves to an active and patient participation in the Petrine dialogue for the sake of shaping a structure of ministry that will speak and act on behalf of and in cooperation with the broader community of Christians in the world towards more effective and faithful service in society.

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